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A

B

A. Fifteenth Century *Cassone* Front, Painted and Gilt, Historical Scene in Central Panel. B. Fifteenth Century *Cassone* with Marriage Procession, Raised *Pastiglia* Decoration, Gilt and Coloured

THE PRACTICAL BOOK OF ITALIAN, SPANISH, AND PORTUGUESE FURNITURE

BY
HAROLD DONALDSON EBERLEIN
AND
ROGER WEARNE RAMSDELL

WITH FRONTISPIECE IN COLOUR
316 ILLUSTRATIONS IN DOUBLETONE
AND 57 IN LINE

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON
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TO
OUR FRIENDS
LEIGH FRENCH, JR.,
AND
PHYLLIS BROWN FRENCH

FOREWORD

THIS book deals with the furniture of Italy, Spain and Portugal, from the Renaissance to the early years of the nineteenth century. It gives in concise, analytical and readily accessible form the historical and critical information necessary to a knowledge of the subject, and it is planned to serve as an handbook for convenient reference over the period covered. For the first time the furniture of these three Latin countries, often closely allied in its characteristics, is here comparatively treated in one volume.

The contents make a threefold appeal—to the general reader, to the decorator and to the architect. The first named, whether interested in furnishing and decoration with a view to immediately personal use or whether regarding them merely as historical phenomena illuminating successive phases in the story of our modern culture, will find the facts desired set forth in orderly array. The second and third will find a digest of the subject so arranged as to be most useful in the daily course of professional work. To the foregoing might, perhaps, be added a fourth class consisting of the dealer and his salesmen. For them the book will provide matter a knowledge of which is vitally important to the intelligent discharge of their occupation.

The volume is illustrated with the best and most characteristic examples from the several periods

treated. The pieces shewn have been carefully chosen so as to be thoroughly representative of the various types in general use at one time or another.

Most of the books hitherto published upon either Italian or Spanish furniture have dealt chiefly or almost exclusively with the period of the Renaissance, making only occasional excursions into the work of the early seventeenth century. Save in a very few instances, the late seventeenth century, the whole of the eighteenth century, and the early years of the nineteenth have been wholly ignored. And yet the furniture made in Italy and in the Iberian peninsula during all that time was of no less interest or excellence than the furniture produced in previous centuries; only the fashion of it had changed to accord with the changed tastes and ideals of the age in other things.

In the present volume the prevalent omission just noted has been remedied. We have tried to keep a due balance between the successive episodes of style and to shew the types in popular favour from the Baroque age to the epoch of Neo-Classic supremacy as well as those that characterised the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

It is quite true that both Italy and Spain during the eighteenth century very largely borrowed their furniture styles from England and France, as they did their styles in many other things. The eighteenth century was the hey-day of furniture design in England. It was no less the golden age of furniture-making in

France. In both countries the art of creating fine furniture was then carried to a point of perfection and elegance before undreamed of. It was natural, therefore, that Italian and Spanish cabinet makers, during their own fallow period of invention, should take pattern from the contemporary creations of English and French craftsmen, especially as English and French fashions in nearly everything else were at that time so much in vogue. They were merely borrowing back from the North some of the inspiration they had themselves so lavishly given forth in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—inspiration by which both England and France had immeasurably profitted. As a matter of fact, English and French furniture forms of the eighteenth century, after all, were for the most part but the offspring begotten of the earlier forms derived from Italy and Spain, and transmuted into fresh expressions by a logical process of evolution and the media of regional and individual bent.

These Italian and Spanish versions of eighteenth century English and French modes were by no means mere slavish copies of the current types popular in London and Paris. On looking at them it is easy enough to see at a glance whence their immediate inspiration came and to trace their unmistakable resemblance to Louis Seize, Hepplewhite or Sheraton designs, as the case may be, but that is not the whole story. The Italian and Spanish chair and cabinet makers never hesitated for an instant to inject into their handiwork

the independence and individuality of their own interpretation. In so doing they almost invariably arrived at a result full of fresh interest and quite distinct in character from the English or French prototype. Take, for example, the late eighteenth century Italian square chairbacks of Sheraton manner. Their family resemblance to the work of the English designer is perfectly patent. Yet the wealth of ingenious imagination displayed in these various interpretations of the one original type of chair baffles any attempt to separate them into closely defined sub-classes. Oftentimes, too, there comes strongly into play an engaging element of playfulness.

It is just this naïve difference from English and French prototypes that creates the essential charm of eighteenth century Italian and Spanish furniture and makes it of present value to us. At the same time, we must not forget that in some cases late eighteenth century Italian and Spanish chairs were so exactly copied from French models that they are not easily distinguishable at first sight from their prototypes.

Whether the reader's interest lie especially in one or another period of Italian or Spanish furniture, or whether a broader, more cosmopolitan and eclectic taste prompt a choice of the most alluring things from all periods, the material for both general and particular study will be found in the ensuing chapters and illustrations.

The close parallellism existing between many types

of Italian and Spanish furniture, from the Renaissance onward, will be obvious from the illustrations, and the correspondence of forms and inter-action of influences will be touched upon in the text. These relationships are partly traceable to the agency of style migration through the ordinary channels of commerce and travelling craftsmen, partly due to the influence of political conditions.

Furniture divorced from its proper setting inevitably loses much of its interest and meaning, and sometimes becomes well-nigh incomprehensible. Even when the inherent quality of a fine piece is readily patent, it is hard to appreciate the full extent of its merits if we totally ignore the character of the environment for which it was first created. For this reason, therefore, the architectural and decorative backgrounds characteristic of the different periods have been outlined in the sectional introductions.

Besides the half-tones that appear throughout the body of the book, there are numerous line cuts to illustrate the variations of contour and the particulars of detail that commonly occur in the different styles.

Attention has also been directed to the fundamental qualities of contour, scale, material and colour that distinguish the various types of furniture dealt with in the course of the volume. This is done to enable the reader to formulate a basis of adaptation or combination when using Italian, Spanish or Portugese furniture

in a mixed composition along with pieces of wholly different provenance.

Thanks are due Morris L. Helburn, of William Helburn Incorporated, for valuable suggestions and for permission to reproduce certain illustrations as noted in the legends; the American Art Galleries, for similar courteous permission; the American Architectural Book Publishing Company for the use of several illustrations; the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, for many of the finest illustrations and for the unfailing courtesy and consideration of all connected with the museum; the Metropolitan Museum of Art for numerous illustrations and thoughtful kindness; the staff of the New York Public Library for constant and ready helpfulness of all kinds; Messrs. John Lavezzo and Co. for the use of many illustrations that it would otherwise have been impossible to obtain; Karl Freund, New York; the former C. M. Traver Co., New York; Nicholas Martin, of New York; the Wanamaker Stores, New York; Enrico Testa, of Florence; Daniel Haddock Farr, Esq.; the Rosenbach Company, of Philadelphia; and last, but by no means least, Ridolfo Peruzzi, Marchese de' Medici, for his interest, for many useful suggestions, valuable information, and for some of the illustrations.

HAROLD DONALDSON EBERLEIN
ROGER WEARNE RAMSDELL

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ITALIAN FURNITURE

THE PRACTICAL BOOK OF ITALIAN, SPANISH, AND PORTUGUESE FURNITURE

ITALIAN FURNITURE

IN DEALING with the Italian Renaissance, a period of marvellous diversity of expression and development, it is customary to divide it into three phases in order to mark more clearly the successive stages of evolution through which the manifestations of style passed. These three episodes or phases are generally called the *Early*, the *High* and the *Late Renaissance*.

By common usage, the Early Renaissance embraces the late fourteenth century, the fifteenth century, and the opening years of the sixteenth; the High Renaissance, overlapping and emerging from the Early Renaissance, covers the first half of the sixteenth century; and the Late Renaissance covers the last half of the sixteenth century and lasts over into the first few years of the seventeenth.

The first era is the time of beginnings, of rapid, fresh and vigorous growth, of departure from the ways and principles of the Gothic mode that had flourished at the close of the Middle Ages, of joyous enthusiasm, fertile experimentation and exuberance of invention in a newly discovered manner of expression.

The second is the period when the style had passed from its earlier tentative stages, its age of experiment and pruning off of Gothic survivals, and had reached the very acme of perfection, the time of maturity, complete and free from all remaining traces of mediæval mannerisms.

The third is the final stage, the time of rank growth and running to seed when the tender freshness of youth and the vigour of maturity had gone, the period of over-elaboration and decline, of self-conscious striving for effect, the period when other influences were appearing that were gradually to gather impetus and strength and finally burst forth in the following century as the fully developed Baroque style.

To define a style or decorative period accurately between two dates, and to say in so many words that it began in this year and ended in that, is impossible. Exact dates, in such cases, are not only arbitrary and self-imposed fetters, but they are also positively misleading if taken too literally. At best, under such conditions, they are merely convenient generalities and memory pegs for purposes of comparison. This is so because the development of style is a process of evolution. Fully developed styles are not born suddenly overnight; one style merges gradually into another, and often by almost imperceptible steps. The history of styles shews conclusively how the process works and how parts of the vanishing manner remain for a while

incorporated in the new, only to be soon discarded and crowded out by newer elements in the course of evolution. Evolution is always gradual; etymologically it is a gradual turning or unfolding.

The great architectural and decorative episode known as the Renaissance was an episode of constant change and evolution. Hence its endless diversity, its vital freshness and its ultimate perfection. It never became crystallised. Crystallisation of any style is a thing entirely of our own creation and exists altogether in our own minds. Indeed, it may be said to exist only in the *crystallised mind.*

We may try to pin down a style at one or another point of its career and declare that precise stage the embodiment and epitome of its perfection, but in actual fact no style ever stands still as long as it is alive. Hence it is that we cannot say—no one can honestly say—in exactly what year, or in exactly what place, the Renaissance began nor at exactly what spot and date it ended. Nor can we any more definitely mark and separate the several stages which convention designates the Early, the High and the Late Renaissance.

We can grasp the true character and significance of the Renaissance only by noting, in the spirit that informed it and the fundamental principles on which it was based, the absolute difference from what went before, at some stated point of style progress, and the like difference from what followed after. If we look at

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the mediæval work of the Gothic period, animated by its own special ideals and principles of expression, we can see from the embodiment of those principles in concrete form how totally different they were from those which we recognise as distinctive of the Renaissance. So, likewise, if we compare the Renaissance with the Baroque and Rococo episodes that followed in succession, we encounter differences no less radical and striking.

Nevertheless, upon searching scrutiny, we find many Gothic features still persisting vigorously in early Renaissance work, somewhat transformed, perhaps, and applied in a new manner, but there they undeniably are and undeniably Gothic in their origin. Again, if we look closely, we shall find the foreshadowings of the Baroque movement while the Renaissance was at its height, the germs that afterwards bore fruit in a result that swept all before it and utterly abandoned the ideals that had actuated the masters of the Renaissance.

Since, then, it is impossible to do so with accuracy, it would be confusing to attempt to set immutable metes and bounds to a great art and psychological movement. And it would be even more misleading to try to establish exact and immovable points and lines of demarcation between the several phases that went to make up the *whole* movement. For this reason we have not pretended to confine the sub-periods within the shackles of absolute dates.

It is better to be content with regarding the Early and High Renaissance together as a continuous episode of nascence, growth and maturity, while the Late Renaissance we may consider separately as a period of ultra-elaboration and overgrowth lasting until the rapidly increasing Baroque tendencies had given unmistakable evidence of their vitality and of their hold upon popular imagination and favour, and of their suitability as a contemporary psychological expression.

The Baroque seventeenth century, despite the ostentation and the absurd exaggerations that characterised its more extreme incidents, produced much that was unquestionably good and thoroughly deserving of admiration. The hysterical flamboyance and splurging pomposity that now and again thrust themselves into notice were, after all, only occasional aberrations; they were not the normal outcome of the tastes and ideals commonly current at the time. The taste for gorgeousness and splendour was keenly active but, at the same time, there was generally a stately sobriety about the creations of the seventeenth century, in architecture, decoration and furniture, that far outweighed any extravagant whimsicalities devised now and then by extremists. The features for which we are indebted to the Baroque age will be specifically pointed out in the introductory notes to a subsequent section. Suffice it here to say that if every item of our legacy from the Baroque age were suddenly to be wiped out of existence,

we should find ourselves reduced to complete discomfort and the utmost poverty of furniture equipment.

The general trend of Italian furniture design during the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth has already been alluded to in the Foreword and will be discussed at more length further on. For the time being it is enough to note that it consistently maintained the unbroken tradition of charm, elegance and diversity attaching to Italian furniture of every sort from the beginning of the Renaissance.

THE EARLY AND THE HIGH RENAISSANCE

BACKGROUNDS OF THE EARLY AND HIGH RENAISSANCE

IN TRYING to visualise the customary setting for Italian furniture of the Early and High Renaissance, we must remember that the fixed background was of two kinds. Either it was severely simple and austere or else it was fully enriched by means of every agency that could contribute to its embellishment. There was little attempt to create interiors of a mixed composition by mingling moderate opulence with medium austerity, with the inevitably disastrous results attendant upon such an ambiguous and contradictory course.

When we say that an interior was severly simple and even austere, it is not necessary to picture an apartment as forbidding as a gaol and as arid as the Desert of Sahara. "The austerity or, as some would call it, the 'bareness' of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian interiors was the calculated emptiness of restraint and reserve . . . To this very emptiness and austerity of reserved strength is due no small measure of the qualities of permanence, repose, sincerity and dignity inherent in the rooms of fifteenth and sixteenth century Italian houses." Such rooms served as foils to the furniture and gave each piece its full value to the

eye; the accent was unmistakable, whether the piece was of simple structure and sparse ornament or richly carved and glowing with colour and gold.

The walls of the austere interior were generally of plain, rough-surfaced plaster in its natural colour or else whitewashed. The floors were generally paved with stone or with large flat bricks about eleven by five inches in size. Ordinarily the bricks were painted and varnished to give a smooth surface. Window cills were oftentimes high above the floor; in such cases, the window was approached by several stone steps and there was not infrequently a stone seat across the window embrasure, or two small seats in the corners, supported on moulded bases. Ceilings were either lunette vaulted and plastered, with pendentives springing from carved stone corbels, or else were beamed with heavy timbers, the beams resting upon corbels of wood, which were sometimes carved and coloured. Even in the very plain rooms, the beams and corbels often bore geometrical patterns in colour, and occasionally the boarding between the beams displayed a simple coloured decoration. The stone fireplaces and doorways, though not always necessarily the vehicles of intricate carving, gave an opportunity as well as the stone corbels for sculptured enrichment effectively concentrated at points of logical emphasis, both in the very plain interiors and also in those where the whole background had come in for decorative treatment.

When the fixed interior background was to be deco-

rated, there was almost no limit to the resources that might be employed. As early as the end of the thirteenth century we know from a passage in Dante's *Vita Nuova,* alluding to a room surrounded by a picture, that it was not unusual to decorate walls with frescoes. Boccaccio also makes frequent allusion to rooms adorned with frescoes. By the end of the fourteenth century we know that the practice was firmly established. The Florentine Leonardo di Niccolo Frescobaldi, supping at the house of Remigio Soranza in Venice, on an August evening of 1384, says that the house "seemed all of gold; there were many chambers which were simply one mass of gold and ultramarine."

The mural decorations were of several distinct sorts. There were geometrical *motifs,* decorations executed in free-hand designs, single figures, and scenes and histories introducing many personages.

"Amongst the geometrical *motifs* one finds such patterns as chevrons or herring-bone bands of alternate green and violet, or violet and blue; patterns of interlacing lines and curves in arrangements of more or less intricacy and wrought in sundry colours; and divers combinations of quatrefoils, squares, rosettes and bands . . . Sometimes the whole wall surface was divided up into squares like a chequer board with armorial blasonings in alternating squares, the other spaces being filled with geometrical *motifs.*

"At times the whole ceiling, starting from the spring of the pendentives at the corbels, would be painted blue and powdered over with stars and fleur-de-lys of gold, with shields here and there bearing the arms of the family and its connexions. Again, the spandrels between the arches of the vaulting might be filled with

conventional or geometrical devices while the uninterrupted field of the ceiling above would be devoted to the depiction of some large subject.

"Amongst the designs executed free hand one may find such schemes as different sorts of emblems and foliage combined with geometrical bands; thin red lines dividing the wall space into squares in which stand out bunches of conventional flowers, alternately green and bluish on a grey ground, or green on a light ground; a composition of trees and painted draperies consisting of a succession of the richest mantles of miniver fastened up around the entire room in the manner of magnificent hangings, a garden of flowers stretching away behind the suspended mantles, and in the farther distance trees with close-clipped foliage, laden with fruit, amongst whose branches flit little birds of gayest plumage. Such was a typical *motif* of decoration which admitted of numerous variations. Sometimes, instead of miniver, the mantles are of blue stuff powdered with silver fleur-de-lys, or brown bedecked with vine tendrils or embellished with shields; sometimes the draperies hang from horizontal rods supported by hooks attached to the trunks of the trees; sometimes they are fastened to the wall at regular intervals folding between one point and another in the manner of ample festoons. And the trees stand forth now against a clear sky, now under the arches of an elegant loggia. Not infrequently a mural scheme of this sort is surmounted by a frieze of foliage, legend-bearing scrolls and shields. With the other previously mentioned schemes, likewise, a frieze was often used, especially when there was a flat beamed ceiling. Now and again the decoration might take the form of landscapes or garden scenes . . .

"The decoration of trees and draperies sometimes covered the entire wall, sometimes only the upper part, while the lower part was decorated with a dado of wood or with another painting of different character, as, for example, a pattern of interlacing red and blue lines on a grey ground . . .

" Very often the walls were faced or lined with wood

to the height of three *braccia* [a little less than five feet] or more, and this facing, called a *spalliera,* served as both a back and background for certain pieces of furniture, such as beds, couches, benches, cupboards and chests that were set against it. In the fourteenth century these dadoes were for the most part of simple character, but in the fifteenth they were often enriched with elaborate mouldings and inlay and became an important item in the decoration of a room. In order to render the dadoes even more ornate it was not an uncommon thing to enclose painted panels between the stiles and rails, and on these panels some of the most renowned artists bestowed their efforts. When the *spalliera* of wood was unadorned it was possible to leave the rest of the wall space above it the plain colour of the plaster, but when this dado was enriched with *intarsia* or painting, the laws of good taste and proportion demanded a corresponding degree of decoration above it, not less sumptuous but somewhat different and of sufficient contrast in character. Such decoration might consist of frescoes, of tapestries, or of a series of larger painted panels enclosed within stiles and rails of wood, inlaid or carved and picked out with gilding, thus actually forming a continuous panelling extending all the way to the ceiling . . .

"The wooden ceilings were of two kinds, the real and the false. The former actually supported the weight of the floor above and displayed the structural beams and joists. The latter was contrived for decorative values and displayed a deeply coffered surface; its function was purely ornamental and not structural as it was attached to the true ceiling above. In the true ceilings colour and gilding were applied to the beams and joists and to the corbels supporting the beams while the natural surface of the boarding above was for the most part undecorated. Sometimes the whole beam would be painted in pure colours with conventional patterns, at other times only the edges of the beams would be embellished.

"The second class of ceilings were much more

ornate in composition. Oftentimes they were richly carved in addition to being painted and gilt, and in the centre of each coffer would appear a carved rosette or some other bit of conventional sculpture. Besides all this combination of rich carving and resplendent colour and gilding, it was customary for a ceiling of this sort to be supported by an equally rich cornice . . .

"Tapestries, and wall hangings of serge or of heavy linen stuff, wrought and painted in divers colours and patterns, were used to a considerable extent, sometimes to cover a large wall space, sometimes to cover only a small area back of a chest or bench. The exact manner, or rather the variety of manners, in which these hangings were customarily used can be more satisfactorily gathered from a study of the contemporary paintings than in any other way. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that it was the custom of the period to use a great number of hangings and draperies in a great number of places to mark festal occasions, while under ordinary circumstances most of them would be folded up and put away. Velvets, silks, brocades and damasks were used to some extent and embroideries also. The employment of such sumptuous decorations increased during the sixteenth century. Leather, stamped in rich patterns and embellished with colour and gilt or silver, was likewise occasionally used."

(*Villas of Florence and Tuscany,* Eberlein: J. B. Lippincott Co.)

As the sixteenth century wore on we meet more frequently with the barrel vaulted ceiling, sometimes of great span, and now and then the coved ceiling appears. As in the fifteenth century, fireplaces and doorways continued to be vehicles of much beautiful and graceful sculptured enrichment although, as the century advanced, projections, lines and patterns became appre-

ciably bolder and lost much of that exquisitely tender delicacy that imparted an almost ethereal quality to not a little of the *quattrocento* work. What was true of the architecture, in this respect, was true of the furniture also. In the matter of mural decorations, the old geometrical diapered repeats and arabesques went quite out of fashion and, in the chromatic enrichment of walls, contemporary taste tended more and more to employ frescoes based on clearly conceived themes and possessing pictorial interest and continuity. They were looked upon less as decorations pure and simple and more as professed works of art and they were judged accordingly. Ceilings as well as walls were frequently adorned with this newer conception in view. Besides making use of tapestries and hangings, people now formed the habit of covering walls completely with damasks, brocatelles, velvets and brocades, thus producing exceedingly rich and full-coloured effects.

FURNITURE

ARTICLES OF FURNITURE IN USE

The articles of furniture ordinarily in use during the Early and High Renaissance were *cassoni* (Plates 1–7) or chests, of many sorts, chairs, tables, stools, benches, bedsteads, book-cupboards or bookcases, *madie* or bread boxes, *credenze* or cabinets corresponding to sideboards, mirrors, wardrobes or hanging cupboards called *armadi* (Plates 12–16), *cassapanche* (Plates 8 and 9) which were the direct ancestors of the modern

sofa, and various types of writing cabinets, desks or tables. In taking account of this inventory it should be borne in mind that each article mentioned in reality appeared under a considerable diversity of forms.

MATERIALS

The materials from which Italian furniture was chiefly made in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were *walnut, chestnut, oak, pine, cypress, elm, beech* and *poplar.* Walnut was, of course, the wood of which all the finer furniture was made, except when it was intended to be coated with *gesso* (Plate 1) as a ground for further decoration or painted and gilt. Then pine, cypress or some one of the other softer woods mentioned would often be used as a base. Monastery furniture was occasionally made of oak or chestnut while the commoner furniture (Fig. 9a) was apt to be made of poplar or beech.

The fashion and quality of the cheaper furniture were strictly regulated by ordinance in Florence; each piece was required to be made of a single kind of wood. This regulation was intended to protect the purchaser.

Amongst the materials must also be reckoned the more varied or precious woods, chosen for their colour, that were used in *intarsia* (Plate 20b) and likewise the ivory or bone necessary for *certosina* (Plate 5a) work or inlay. The catalogue should furthermore include tooled leather and velvet employed for coverings, and the *pastiglia* (Plates 3b and 4a) or *gesso* and linen

requisite in the decorative processes of some of the more elaborate *cassoni*.

CONTOUR AND STRUCTURE

In contour the furniture of the Early Renaissance was essentially and emphatically rectilinear. Although curving lines appeared, now and again, the curves were rarely structural except in the bodies of some of the "boat" (Plate 2a) and "sarcophagus" (Plates 3b and 5c) *cassoni* and in the X or scissors types of chairs (Plates 25c, 26b and Fig. 9a).

Furthermore, the rectilinear accent was strongly *horizontal* and not vertical. This, of course, was in accord with the principles of the increasing Renaissance tendency exemplified in all matters of design, but especially in architecture and in the fashion of furniture. Although the ceilings of the rooms were commonly lofty, few pieces of furniture were tall except the canopies of such bedsteads as had high posts, like that seen in Correggio's painting of the Annunciation.

Nearly all the Florentine furniture—and Florence led the way in Renaissance furniture as in Renaissance architecture and all the other arts—was distinguished by sobriety and reticence of line. Ordinarily the projections were low, the mouldings were of restrained profile, and the majority of surfaces were flat. Minuteness of detail and exquisite delicacy of ornamentation, comparable to the manner of goldsmiths' work, were everywhere in evidence.

Deeply cut carving, with insistent and robust *motifs* in *high relief* (Plates 2c and 5c), did not appear until the sixteenth century in the High Renaissance. In short, the furniture of the Early Renaissance, like the architecture of the era, was intellectual rather than emotional in its manifestation. Not a little of the furniture of the period, indeed, was informed with architectural conceptions, and the relationship between furniture and architecture was plainly evident (Plates 10a and b; 12 and 14).

Finally, while all the furniture of the Early and High Renaissance was thoroughly substantial and some of it was massive, it was not by any means ponderous or gross in its proportions.

DECORATIVE PROCESSES

The decorative processes most in use were *carving, painting* and *gilding, intarsia* work or inlay in multi-coloured woods, *certosina* work or inlay with ivory or bone, turning, painting in *pastiglia,* covering with *tooled leather* or *woven fabrics, panelling* defined by mouldings, and the employment of *wrought iron and bronze* mounts, bandings and grilles.

Carving. The carving ordinarily employed was of several sorts—*incised* or *gouge* carving (Plate 5b), *chip* carving (Fig. 9a and Plate 34c), carving in *low relief,* carvings in *moderate relief* (*mezzo-relievo*) (Plate 30b), and carving in *high relief* (*alto relievo*) (Plate 5c) and also in the round.

The first was done by cutting out or sinking the ground immediately surrounding the figure or other item of design to be left standing forth flush with the flat surface of the wood. The figure thus left standing up from its sunk ground had a perfectly flat surface, like the rest of the board or panel, and appeared as a silhouette. This silhouette could then be articulated with features, lines of drapery and the like, by paint, by very shallow incised lines or by burning on the lines with an hot drawing tool—a bit of pyrography, in other words. Good examples of this sort of carved decoration may be seen in Plate 5b.

By means of chip carving lines, conventional *motifs* and geometrical patterns of simple character could be executed by a succession of small and unconnected gouges of the graving tool to form the design. Simple monastery chairs of beech and poplar were often decorated in this manner. Examples may be seen in Plate 34c and Fig. 9a.

The other carving processes and types are sufficiently familiar to render detailed comment unnecessary.

Intarsia Work. *Intarsia* (Plates 7 and 26b) work as a means of decoration, both for furniture and for fixed panelling, was greatly esteemed and practised during the fifteenth century and its popularity continued during the early years of the sixteenth. Before the century had far advanced, however, it fell out of fashion and its place was taken by carving. Its execution called for great skill and delicacy in the nice ad-

justment of the tiny bits of vari-coloured woods into the beds cut out for them in the walnut ground.

Certosina Work. *Certosina* work (Pates 20a and 22a) was another means of intricate inlaid decoration highly esteemed during the fifteenth century. Like *intarsia* it soon went out of fashion after the beginning of the sixteenth century. Minute pieces of ivory or bone were deftly set in incisions in a walnut ground accurately cut out to receive them. The designs executed in *certosina* work, although often of the most intricate character, were purely geometrical and conventional.

Turning. Turning, as a means of furniture decoration, was not extensively practised during the fifteenth century and it was not until the sixteenth century was well advanced that its decorative capacity was utilised to any appreciable extent. Indeed, its full resources were not brought into play until the seventeenth century.

Pastiglia Decoration. The process of *pastiglia* decoration (Plate 3b) consisted in covering the *cassone*, cabinet, or whatever the piece of furniture might be, with coarse linen or fine canvas, strained or glued over both the moulded and flat surfaces. Over this were painted successive coats of *pastiglia*, a thick creamy mixture of *gesso* which dried and hardened rapidly. When the ground coat was sufficiently smooth and sufficiently thick to stand the painting, or the gilding and burnishing, that were afterwards to take place, the

decorative patterns in relief were gradually built up by successive brush applications of the mixture, each application building up more body and higher relief for the next application. When the patterns in relief were raised high enough above the flat surface, the details could be finished and sharpened up with a knife. The gold was then applied and either burnished or left unburnished. Very often a red coat was applied over the *pastiglia* before the gold was applied. Good examples of *pastiglia* decoration may be seen in Plates 3b and 4a. Although *pastiglia* decoration was most extensively practised in the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth, the principles of the process were never given up and continued to be used, in one modified form or another, throughout the entire period covered by this volume.

Leather and Fabric Covering. Covering chair seats and backs with stamped leather or with velvets (Plates 25a and b) or brocades (Plate 26b) made a fairly important item of decoration in the sixteenth century. Occasionally small chests or cabinets were covered in the same way. The use of stamped or carved leather seems to have been due in great measure to Spanish inspiration.

TYPES OF DECORATION

The *motifs* of decoration employed in the various processes included many items of Gothic derivation (Figs. 1a and k; Plates 4a and b and 7), geometrical

patterns, conventionalised *motifs* of both Gothic and Classic provenance, Classic foliage and arabesques (Fig. 1, j and Plates 3b and 23b), human (Plates 2c and 5c) and mythological figures, and all manner of naturalistic subjects.

Gothic foliage, tracery and geometrical patterns were of still quite common occurrence in the fifteenth century (Plates 4a and b), but had almost entirely disappeared at the beginning of the sixteenth. Geometrical figures for bandings and fields were constantly employed in both *intarsia* and *certosina* work. Naturalistic *motifs*, too, were often dexterously carried out in *intarsia*. The whole repertoire of Classic ornament, in all the media of decoration, is to be found throughout both the Early and High Renaissance. Naturalistic subjects, too, held their own without interruption. Marriage processions (Plate 1b), historical scenes (Plate 1a), garden representation and the like were painted from the fourteenth century onward and the expert carvers of the High Renaissance found them no less alluring than had their earlier brethren of the brush.

Mounts. The pulls, key-plates, bandings for chests and other mounts of the Early and High Renaissance were commonly of iron or bronze. Sometimes the iron was beautifully wrought, and afterwards enriched with gilding. Save for the occurrence of occasional brass studdings for chair coverings, and one or two other inconspicuous items of the sort, brass mounts with

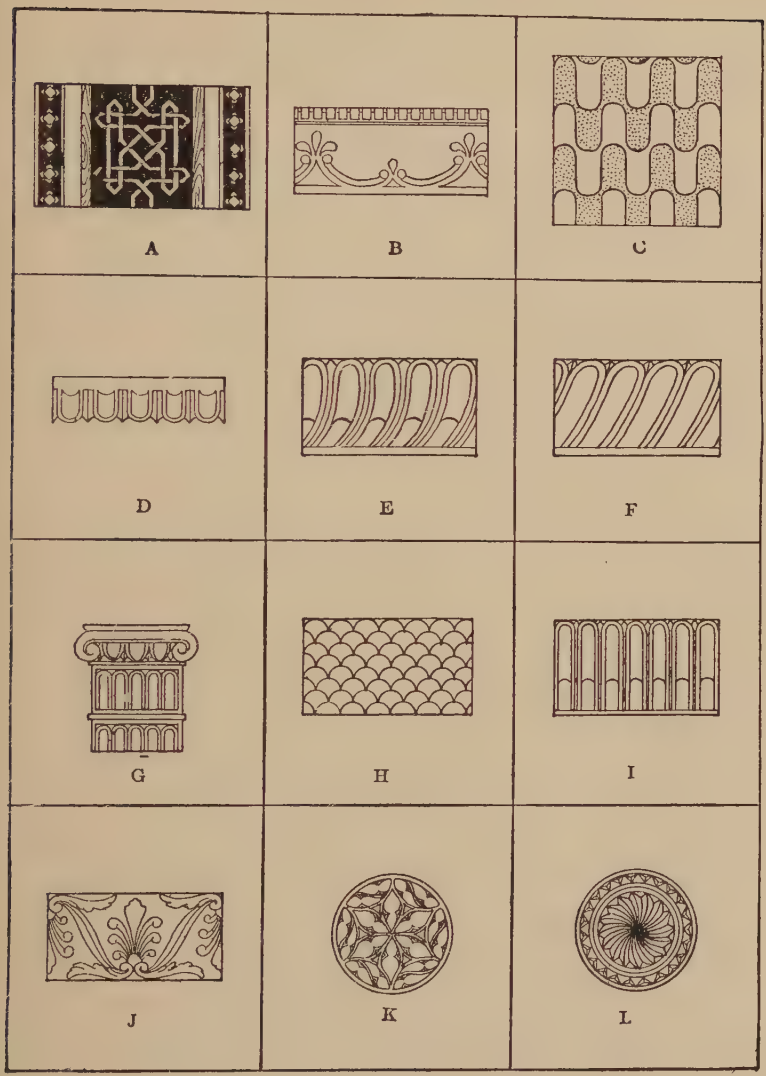


Fig. 1.—Typical Early and High Renaissance *Motifs* of Decoration

deliberately decorative intent were not much used until the end of the sixteenth century, but more especially still in the seventeenth. Plates 21a and 29b shew the general character of the very early iron mounts when not employed for anything further than pulls.

Finish. The usual finish for the wood of Italian furniture of the Early High Renaissance was merely an occasional application of olive oil with a subsequent rubbing down. Wax was used now and then for rubbing purposes but, as a rule, olive oil with a wiping down was considered sufficient for all purposes.

CASSONI OR CHESTS

The *cassone* or chest was by all odds the most important, the most representative, the most ubiquitous, and the most generally useful and adaptable piece of Early Renaissance furniture. It was likewise the most numerous. Notwithstanding the increased variety and greater specialisation of household equipment that came with the ripening of the High Renaissance, the *cassone* maintained its place with undiminished popularity. There was almost invariably at least one *cassone* in every room; not infrequently there were several; even in a relatively small house there might be ten or more while in some houses there would be as many as fifty.

While the *cassone* was primarily a receptacle for the storage of clothing and every other conceivable article of household possession, both precious and common, it served also as a seat by day and oftentimes as a

bed at night, a mattress or cushions being placed on its top. Then, again, some of the higher chests not infrequently did duty as tables or as sideboards.

Apart from its purely utilitarian functions, the *cassone* was generally one of the chief movable adornments and on many of the finer examples all manner of expense and artistry of workmanship were freely lavished. They were made of walnut when they were to be carved or inlaid, and frequently of the "meaner" woods, such as pine or cypress, when they were to be painted all over or covered with *pastiglia* decoration.

The painting was often of the greatest excellence (Plates 1a and b) as well as of the greatest diversity in treatment. Vasari says that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries "it was the custom of the people to have in their chambers great wooden chests of various forms, and everyone used to have them painted with stories from the myths of Ovid and other poets, or hunting scenes or jousts, or tales of love according to the taste of each one." The widest variety, perhaps, in the painted decoration of *cassoni* is to be found on the examples remaining from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Some idea of this highly varied treatment may be gained from the *cassoni* shewn in the illustrations (Plates 1–7 and 27). Not a few of the earliest and finest examples were covered with *pastiglia* decoration, gilded; oftentimes, too, these gilt *pastiglia cassoni* had a further enrichment of painted panels framed within ornate gilt *pastiglia* mouldings (Plates

1a and b). *Cassoni* of this sort particularly delighted the hearts of the Sienese and afforded an opportunity to gratify the well known Sienese taste for joyous gorgeousness. Sienese gorgeousness, incidentally, was always well studied and delicate; no matter how opulent or intricate its character, it was never in the slightest degree blatant nor vulgar.

In the later fifteenth century and early in the sixteenth, the painted *cassoni* (Plate 1) were time and again masterpieces of art, as they may well have been when Botticelli, Andrea del Sarto, Ghirlandajo, Peselino, Piero di Cosimo and the ablest of their pupils thought no scorn of working upon them but took pride in making them glorious. The painted *cassoni* panels (Plate 1) were so good, in fact, that the Philistines of a later age time and again detached them from their proper setting and treated them as merely easel pictures. Many of these waifs hang in the different galleries of Europe.

The *cassoni* enriched with carving or *intarsia* (Plates 2b and c; 5c and 7) were often wrought with equal cunning and presented a scarcely less splendid appearance than the chests that were painted and gilt. Richly carved *cassoni* (Plates 2c, 5c and 27a), however, belong rather to the sixteenth century than to an earlier date. Save in the Veneto and the northernmost parts of Italy, fourteenth and fifteenth century *cassoni* were rarely carved; the finer *cassoni,* for the most part, were either inlaid with *intarsia* (Plate 7) or *certosina*

A. Fourteenth Century "Boat" Shaped *Cassone* with Cambered Lid, Painted. B. Early Sixteenth Century *Cassone*, Walnut, *Intarsia* and Carved Ornament, and "Raised" Lid. C. Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut *Cassone* with "Domed" Lid
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A. Fourteenth Century *Cassone* with Cambered Lid, Painted Decoration, Iron Strap Mounts and Short Feet. B. Fifteenth Century Sienese Sarcophagus-shaped *Cassone* on Moulded Base, *Pastiglia* Decoration Gilt. C. Fifteenth Century *Cassone*, Gilt and Polychrome *Pastiglia* Decoration.

Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A

B

C

A. Early Fifteenth Century Sienese *Cassone* with Shaped Apron and Gilt *Pastiglia* Decoration in Gothic *Motifs*. B. Fifteenth Century Florentine *Cassone*, *Intarsia* Decoration and Geometrical Carved Gothic Panels. C. Early Sixteenth Century Florentine *Cassone*, Walnut with *Intarsia* Bandings, Carved Ornament and "Domed" Lid
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A. Fifteenth Century North Italian *Cassone, Certosina* Inlay in Walnut, and Chess Board on Under Side of Lid. B. Early Fifteenth Century North Italian Walnut *Cassone*, Incised Decoration and Deep Apron. C. High Renaissance Walnut Roman *Cassone*, Sarcophagus-shaped on Moulded Base, "Domed Lid," and High Relief Carving.
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

PLATE 6

Early Fifteenth Century Marriage *Cassone* with Polychrome Painted "Millefiori" Decorations, Probably Florentine

Fifteenth Century Florentine Walnut *Cassone* with Gothic Geometrical *Intarsia* Decoration
Courtesy of Enrico Testa, Florence

PLATE 8

Fifteenth Century Florentine Walnut Bench on Moulded Dais, with Geometrical *Intarsia* Decoration. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

A. Early Sixteenth Century Florentine Walnut *Cassapanca*. B. Early Sixteenth Century Florentine Walnut Armless Bench with Sarcophagus Base, on Dais
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

(Plate 5a) work or else painted (Plate 6). An example of an early northern *cassone* decorated with incised carving is shewn in Plate 5b. As the sixteenth century advanced, however, *intarsia* and *certosina* work fell into disuse, as already pointed out, and the preference seems to have swerved more to carving. The character of the carving, too, changed somewhat as the sixteenth century wore on—the relief was bolder and more assertive and, although the workmanship was of the finest quality, there was some loss of the delicate refinement that distinguished the earlier pieces. During the High Renaissance some marvellously fine instances of wood sculpture appeared on the *cassoni* of both Florence and Rome, examples of which may be seen in Plates 2, 4 and 5.

The simplest form of *cassone* was just a long, low box with a flat lid (Plate 3c, 4b and 5b). There was also the "boat-shaped" *cassone,* as it was called, whose body was rounded inward in front like the hull of a boat, receding towards a moulded base or feet, as the case might be (Plate 2a). These boat-shaped *cassoni* were usually of very early date; the type seems to have gone completely out of use before the beginning of the sixteenth century. Another "shaped" form was the sarcophagus *cassone* having a contour like that of an old Roman sarcophagus (Plates 3b and 5c); this sort sometimes stood upon feet, sometimes upon a moulded base.

Cassoni also had a variety of top coverings. Of

these, the plain flat lid, projecting a little beyond the sides of the chest, was usually found with chests of the plainest type, although it sometimes appears in company with ornate decorations of carving, panelling or painting on the sides. Then there were "raised" lids, that is lids whose central portion or panelling, surrounded by mouldings, was raised somewhat above the outside edges (Plate 2b). Another form of lid was the "domed" or shaped lid; the central part of this lid was raised by a succession of mouldings until its contour approximated that of a flat dome (Plates 2c, 4c and 5c). Again, there was the cambered or slightly arched lid, examples of which may be seen in Plates 2a and 3a.

Some *cassoni* stood flat on the ground. Usually, however, they stood upon a moulded base (Plates 4b and c and 5c), or else upon feet (Plates 2b and c and 7). The earlier sort of feet were of the bracket type (Plates 4a, 5b and 7), and sometimes, in connexion with these feet, there was a shaped and decorated apron (Plate 4a). The straight apron extending all the way to the ground, shewn in Plate 5b, is of very archaic type. Again, some of the very early chests had runner feet at the ends (Plate 6). The later carved paw feet, so much used during the sixteenth century, were canted outward from the corners (Plate 2b and c).

The divisions of the fronts and ends varied a good deal according to the inclination of the maker rather than according to any classifications of time or locality

that can reasonably be made. The front might be plain with a continuous painted design, as in Plate 6; it might be divided into panels, as in Plates 1a, 3a, 4, 5a and 7; or, again, the front might be filled with continuous carving framed in between carved figures canted on the corners, as in Plates 2b and 5c. Scrolls, figures and other pieces of semi-detached carving in the round, used as end or corner adornments occurred in both the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but the majority of *cassoni* were without them.

CASSAPANCHE OR BENCHES

The *cassapanca* or bench with ends was the direct ancestor of the modern sofa. It was a stately piece of furniture that stood against the wall and usually occupied a place of honour as a state seat. It was in use during the fifteenth century and continued in favour during a good part of the sixteenth. As seats of state and honour, *cassapanche* usually stood upon a low dais.

The earlier sort were of very simple lines, were generally panelled, and were often enrichd with bandings of *intarsia,* as may be seen in Plate 8 and Fig. 2. The later sort of *cassapanca,* of the type made during the sixteenth century, depended upon mouldings and carving for its decoration (Plate 9). The backs and the ends of the arms of these sixteenth century *cassapanche* were frequently panelled more or less elaborately, and the front ends of the arms were as like as not made the vehicles of bold carving (Plate 9a). Some of the six-

teenth century backs were raked at a very perceptible angle; the fifteenth century backs were not raked but entirely vertical (Plate 8 and Fig. 2).

The backs of the fifteenth century *cassapanche* were perfectly straight (Plate 8 and Fig. 2); while many of the sixteenth century backs continued straight across from arm to arm in an unbroken line, others,

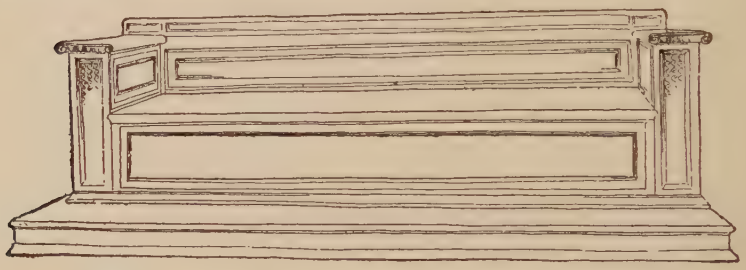


FIG. 2.—Fifteenth Century *Cassapanca* with *Intarsia* Decoration
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

again, were adorned with a carved cresting. The base of the *cassapanca,* solidly closed in from the front of the seat to this dais, was perfectly vertical in the fifteenth century type and a great many of the sixteenth century examples exhibit the same sort of vertical front. In a number of cases, however, the front of the base recedes backward from the edge of the seat quite perceptibly (Plate 9a). The seat of the *cassapanca* was commonly hinged so that it could be lifted and the part within the closed base used as a chest.

Another type of bench used during the fifteenth century had a straight panelled back without arms or ends and a closed-in panelled base which served as a

chest, the seat being hinged to lift as a lid (Plate 8). This sort of bench also stood on a low dais and was practically the same as the *cassapanca* except for the ends or arms. A slightly later type of this raised and backed, but armless seat, is shewn in Plate 9b. It is in the manner of the early sixteenth century. The only significant variation in contour from the type shewn in Plate 9a is that the closed-in base, instead of having vertical sides, has both the ends and front sloped inwards so that the seat somewhat approaches the sarcophagus shape displayed by some of the *cassoni.*

Still another type of the bench family was the throne seat; an armless seat with high panelled back and closed-in base, set on a dais. This sort of seat occurred in the late fifteenth century and early sixteenth and may be considered as belonging to the Early Renaissance—though at the latter end—rather than to any other period. These throne seats were sometimes short, sometimes long enough to accommodate three or four sitters.

There were also plain benches or forms, without backs or arms, supported on trestles or carved trusses at each end; these were used during both the Early and High Renaissance.

CREDENZE AND CREDENZINI

The *credenza,* the direct progenitor of the later sideboard, was one of the very early pieces of Italian cabinetwork and, next the *cassone,* one of the most typical and important pieces of wall furniture.

In form and structure it was close akin to the old sacristy cupboards in which church vestments and books were kept when not in use. Its employment as an article of domestic furniture, indeed, was probably suggested by these sacristy cupboards. However that may be, the *credenza* was in use at a very early date, certainly as early as the fourteenth century. The Umbrian example, from the Volpi Collection (Fig. 3b), is of walnut and is purely Gothic in the character of its design.

By the fifteenth century the *credenza* plainly reflected all the characteristics of Early Renaissance design by which other pieces of contemporary furniture were distinguished; in the sixteenth century its evolution continued, keeping pace with the tastes and preferences of the High Renaissance.

The earlier *credenze* had flat tops and the composition of their fronts was distinctly architectural in manner (Plate 10 and Fig. 3a). There was usually a continuous moulded base or plinth (Plate 10), although some very early examples had the moulded base supported on feet in the form of couching lions or the like (Fig. 3a).

Above the moulded base the front was divided into two or more doors, with spaces at the ends which did not open, and also often between the doors. These spaces might be either panelled or graced with pilasters (Plate 10 and Figs. 3a and 4a).

The frieze above the doors and directly beneath the

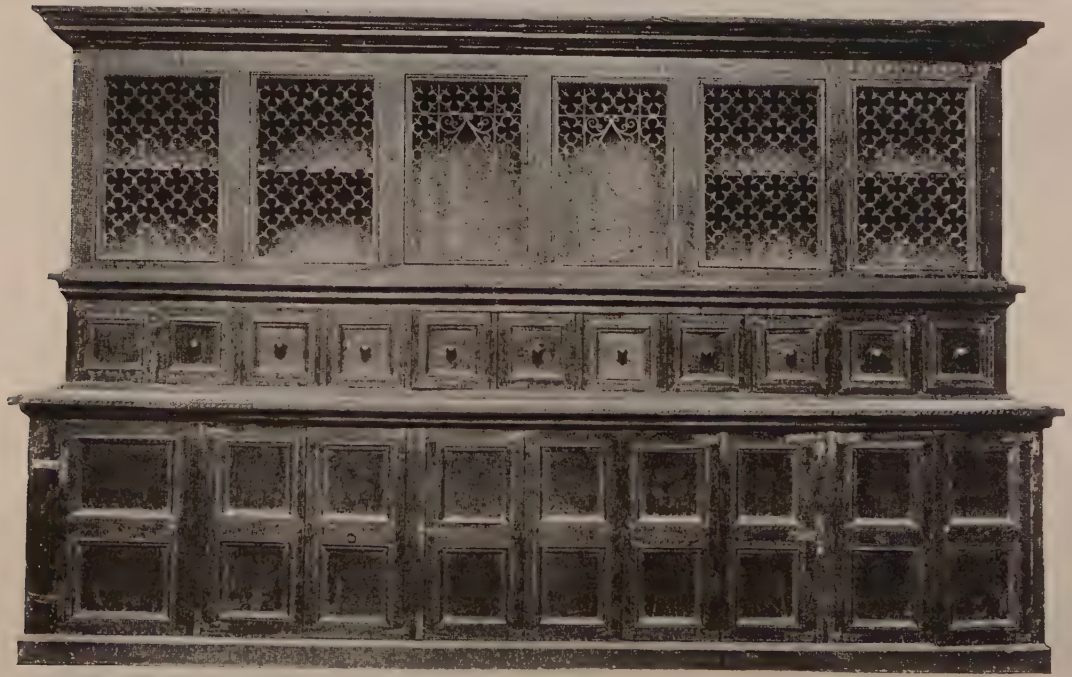
A

A. Early Fifteenth Century Walnut *Credenza* or Cabinet of Architectural Character with Minute *Intarsia* Decoration
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

B. Fifteenth Century Walnut *Credenza* with *Intarsia* Decoration
Courtesy of Arthur Acton, Esquire, Florence

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut *Credenza*, Gadrooned Base, Guilloche Ornament, Frieze Brackets, and Canted Paw Feet. B. Sixteenth Century Walnut *Credenza* with Gadrooned Base, Canted Paw Feet, Fluted Ionic Pilasters, and Drawers and Brackets in Frieze
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

PLATE 12



Late Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Walnut Book Cupboard with *Intarsia* Decoration. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

Sixteenth Century Walnut Book Cupboard on Moulded Base with Long Bracket Feet

Fifteenth Century Sienese Polychromed and Gilt *Armadio* or Hanging-cupboard of Architectural Character. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

PLATE 15

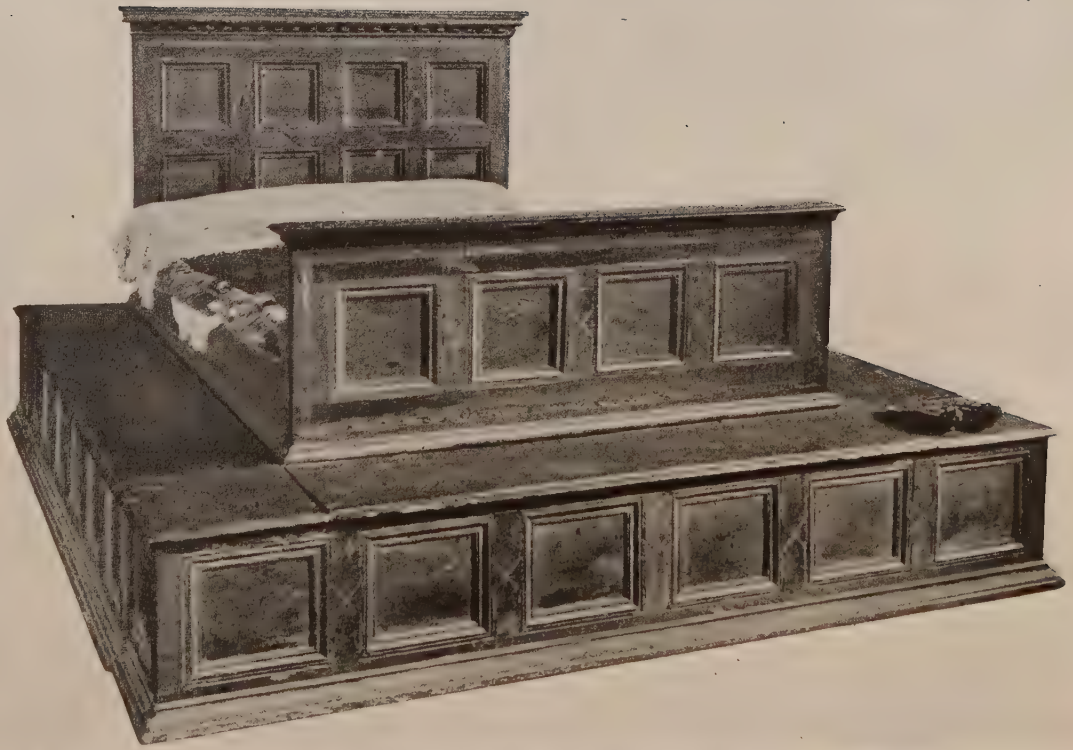
Late Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Sienese Painted and Gilt *Armadio* on Moulded Base with Bracket Feet

PLATE 16

A

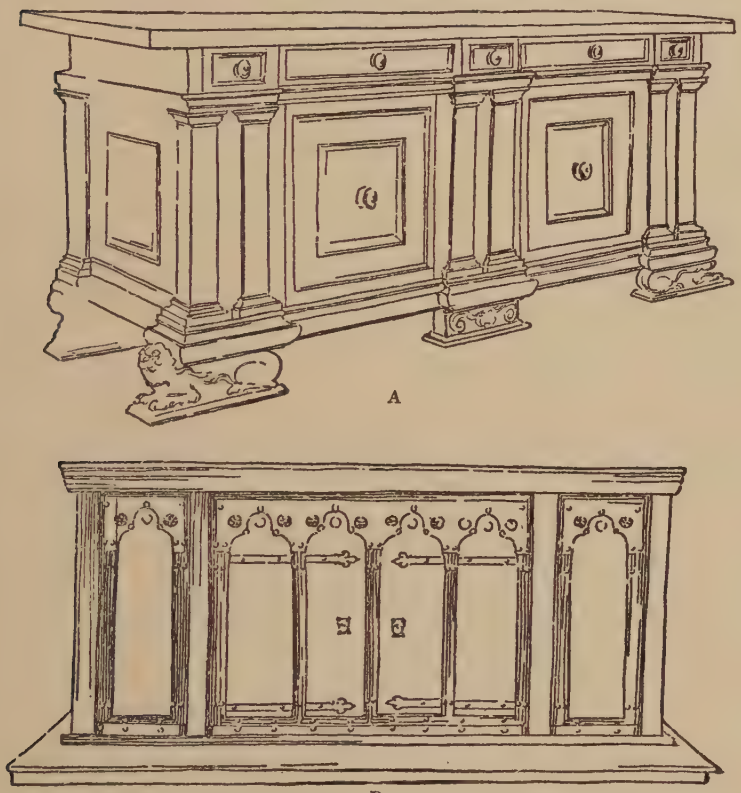
B

A. Late Sixteenth Century Painted *Armadio* with Drawer Above Moulded Base
Courtesy of Arthur Acton, Esquire, Florence
B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Writing Cabinet with Falling Front and Cupboard Base. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries



Fifteenth Century Florentine Walnut Bedstead with *Intarsia* Ornament. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

top might or might not contain short, shallow drawers (Fig 3a). When there were drawers they ordinarily corresponded in length with the door and pilaster divi-



A

B

Fig. 3.—A. Fifteenth Century Bolognese *Credenza*. B. Fourteenth Century Gothic *Credenza*
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

sions beneath; they usually corresponded in number also.

In the earlier *credenze,* especially those without drawers, the frieze was continuous (Plate 10a); in the

sixteenth century, whether drawers were present or not, the frieze was often interrupted by modillion brackets, sometimes elaborately carved with acanthus foliage or some other appropriate decorative device (Plates 11a and b).

The gallery or rack on the *credenza* top was a feature of only occasional occurrence; most *credenze* did not have them. They were sometimes found, however, early in the sixteenth century (Fig. 4a) and might appear in the form of one or more uninterrupted shelves or gradines, like those of the mediæval *credence* from which they were no doubt derived. In other instances they appeared as a succession of small drawers, or small drawers alternating with little cupboard doors.

Throughout their history *credenze* were made of walnut. The decorations consisted of *intarsia* bandings and of mouldings, or else of carving and mouldings. A great many of the Early Renaissance *credenze* were distinguished by their comparatively flat surfaes, defined by restrained mouldings and embellished with *intarsia* enrichments. In addition to the intricate *intarsia* bandings and other geometrical devices, there was sometimes a further *intarsia* decoration for panels in the form of human figures and flowers, as in the example shewn in Plate 10b, where the doors bear subjects from Biblical history.

The typical *credenze* of the High Renaissance, when *intarsia* had gone out of fashion, were generally char-

acterised by more elaborate and bolder carving. At times the door panels were merely surrounded by enriched raised mouldings with, perhaps, a pull or some other feature in the centre of the panels; again, the whole panel surface would be intricately carved, terminal figures at the ends and between the doors would supplant the pilasters, the frieze or the drawer fronts would display carved *motifs* of more or less intricacy, the moulded base would often take the shape of a bold torus, either gadrooned or carved with honeysuckles, semi-rosettes or the like, and the supports raising the moulded base from the floor would be carved paw feet canted outward at the corners. It is true that the gadrooned torus base appeared in some rather early examples (Fig. 4a), but this feature belonged to the High Renaissance rather than to the Early.

A piece of cabinetwork closely related to the *credenza* was the *credenzino* which usually had a pair of doors with a drawer above. This piece of furniture served the purpose of a console or commode and came into common use during the sixteenth century. Ordinarily it was about three feet high, or a little less, and from twenty inches to two feet wide across the front. In general design it was closely analogous to its larger relative.

It was also akin in structure, contour, and decoration to the *prie-dieu,* an example of which appears in Fig. 15b.

ARMADI, CABINETS AND BOOK-CUPBOARDS

Exuberant Italian inventiveness and love of diversity prompted the contrivance of all manner of cabinets and cupboards for the holding of sundry goods and chattels. They were of all sorts of shapes and sizes from the niches in walls, fitted with shelves and closed in with doors on which ornate decorations were painted, to the stately *armadi* that were frequently vehicles of exquisite enrichment and formed momentous additions to the equipment of both Early and High Renaissance rooms.

The *armadio* was the most imposing member of this large family of cabinets and cupboards. It was an hanging-cupboard or wardrobe and the front consisted of two or more doors framed in by the necessary stiles and rails. The term "hanging-cupboard," of course, signifies a cupboard or wardrobe tall enough to hang clothing and other articles in conveniently without folding them up.

One type of Early Renaissance *armadio,* like that shewn in Plate 14, was long enough to have four doors. It stood on a moulded base, without feet or legs, and the doors extended the full height from the base to the top, which was finished with a moulded cornice. The Early Renaissance *armadio* of this description, if made of walnut had reticent mouldings and was apt to be embellished with *intarsia* bandings and *intarsia* lozenges or similar *motifs* in the small panels of the doors, like the monastery cupboard or *armadio* shewn in Fig.

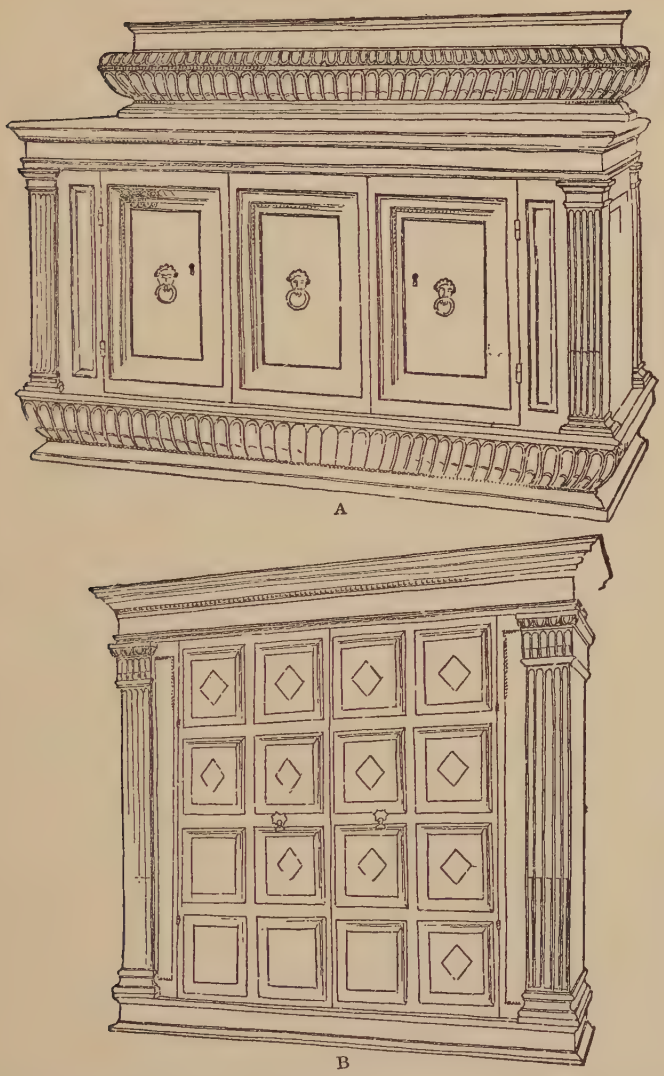


FIG. 4.—A. Fifteenth Century *Credenza* with Galleried Top. B. Fifteenth Century Monastery *Armadio*
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

4b. If the *armadio* was to bear painted and gilt decoration, like those in Plates 14, 15 and 16a, it was more likely to be made of pine, cypress or beech. The drawer in the base of the *armadio* in Plate 16a shews another form of arrangement.

The painted and gilt *armadio* shewn in Plate 15 displays a further method of arrangement not at all unusual—two doors below for the hanging-cupboard, with two smaller doors immediately above opening into a shelved upper compartment, although the total height of this piece is a little less than six feet.

Both the *armadi* illustrated in Plates 14 and 15 are of Sienese origin and are good examples of Early Renaissance Sienese furniture painting. The four-door *armadio* exhibits a broad range of colours in its sumptuous and graceful arabesque decoration. The other *armadio,* with the arms of the Tolomei on the panels of its doors, notwithstanding the proverbial Sienese love of rich colouring, is wrought only with gold arabesques and mouldings on a pleasant light chocolate brown body colour.

The *armadi* of the High Renaissance were apt to be somewhat taller than those of the earlier period and their enrichment depended chiefly upon carvings and mouldings rather than upon polychrome and gold or *intarsia* adornment.

The book-cupboard was an essential item of early Renaissance domestic furniture for the houses of wealthy and cultured people as well as a necessary

part of the equipment in the libraries of monasteries. These cupboards or bookcases had panelled doors enclosing a succession of smaller cupboards in the lower part, while the upper part of the bookcase, which was set back a little from the lower body, had shelves which were closed in by doors whose panels were filled with wrought iron grilles, the iron-work often being gilded wholly or in part (Plates 12 and 13).

The lower body might contain drawers above the lower range of cupboards, as in the book press shewn in Plate 13, or the small drawers might be in the upper body immediately beneath the iron-grilled doors of the book shelves, as in the press shewn in Plate 12.

The book presses stood either on a continuous moulded base, without feet, like the example in Plate 12, or else the moulded base might have bracket feet like the press in Plate 13. The last-mentioned example is somewhat later in date than the other. In general, the use of feet beneath a moulded base is apt to indicate that the piece to which they belong is well along towards the period of the High Renaissance. This is not invariably true, however, as the feet of some very early pieces are unquestionably original.

Another form of Early Renaissance book press was like those in the Vatican library; it was virtually an *armadio* or hanging-cupboard, with shelves instead of hanging pegs inside, and with solid panelled doors from top to bottom.

The book presses of the High Renaissance had either

doors or drawers in the lower body, sometimes both, and the upper body had doors with glass panels. They were not at all unlike the secretary bookcases of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in their make-up. They were generally taller than the book presses of the Early Renaissance, and their enrichment consisted of carving and mouldings in the manner of the day with oftentimes the addition of columns or pilasters at the sides.

BEDSTEADS

As already pointed out, *cassoni* and *cassapanche* frequently served in lieu of bedsteads in Renaissance Italy. Serving men and other male retainers in many instances slept on them in great halls and other large apartments or anterooms where they might be at the beck and call or their masters at any moment. Other people, too, above the rank of serving men were not loath to get their night's sleep on *cassoni* and *cassapanche,* for bedsteads were not as numerous as they were at a later date. For this we have the abundant testimony of contemporary documents. Nevertheless, there were a great many substantial bedsteads and they were of various types.

The high-posted bedstead with a tester and curtains had been in use in mediæval times, and we continue to find it, in one form or another, right down into the nineteenth century. The high-posted bedstead of the Early Renaissance we may see faithfully depicted in

Correggio's "Annunciation," which was painted about 1490, as well as in other paintings of the period. The testimony of contemporary paintings regarding furniture is invaluable and invariably trustworthy, for the Italian painters of the pre-Renaissance and Renaissance ages were intense realists and unhesitatingly put into their pictures such incidental features of the background as they were accustomed to see in everyday life; they never troubled their heads about archæological proprieties and would paint Saint Peter or King Solomon in Italian Renaissance garb without caring a straw what kind of raiment they really might have worn.

Another characteristic type of Early Renaissance bedstead had a small-panelled headboard and a somewhat lower footboard panelled in the same manner. That much of the bedstead was quite modern in appearance, but there the resemblance ended. There were low panelled sides, to be sure, but there were no legs. Instead of legs, there was a panelled dais or platform, somewhat broader and longer than the bedstead itself, on which the bedstead stood and to which it was attached. This dais was high enough above the floor to sit upon comfortably. One first stepped up on the dais and then crawled into bed. The dais also fulfilled the functions of a bedside table. This type of Early Renaissance bedstead is illustrated in Plate 17.

Another sort of Early Renaissance bedstead is that preserved in the Ospedale del Ceppo at Pistoia. This

type of bedstead, again, is quite modern in its general appearance with legs, headboard and lower footboard. It is entirely painted with intricate decorations and calls to mind what Vasari said of the furnishing of thirteenth and fourteenth century Italian houses. After describing the *cassoni* and the scenes painted on them, he continues, "And in the same way were painted the beds and chairs and other furniture of the rooms."

Early in the sixteenth century we find bedsteads like that shewn in Fig. 12, with carved headboard, lower carved footboard, and half-length posts of spiral form or garnished with bold carving. Bedsteads of this type not infrequently had canopies over them made of handsome fabrics.

There were other High Renaissance bedsteads with high spiral or flower and arabesque-carved posts, carved headboards and no footboards. Bedsteads of this kind had usually a tester and curtains. Sometimes they were of walnut, at other times they were of some "meaner" wood and wholly painted and gilt.

There were also in the sixteenth century low trundle bedsteads which were often used for servants and children.

WRITING FURNITURE

The writing furniture of the Early and High Renaissance varied in form from tall cabinets with doors or drop fronts to tables with drawers in them. Every conceivable kind of thing seems to have been used, including one piece closely resembling an eighteenth century

British or American slant-top desk, and that a piece of very early date. Throughout both the Early and High Renaissance the number of varied types of writing furniture is far larger than one would expect; during the Late Renaissance, needless to say, the number did not diminish.

One characteristic fifteenth century form was the *bancone,* an example of which appears in Plate 18a. Pieces of this sort were particularly characteristic of Tuscany and Umbria. The two panel-fronted drawers immediately beneath the underframing held books and writing materials; the panelled body below the drawers made room for the drawers let into the ends. This arrangement of parts still left room for the runner feet and brackets without making the table too high to write at with comfort. The *bancone,* with its deep body and well placed drawers, was a comprehensive and useful piece of furniture and its employment continued into the sixteenth century. Another *bancone* of slightly different arrangement is seen in Plate 19b; it is evidently, however, only a variant belonging to the same family as the example previously mentioned.

A second type of flat-topped writing table may be seen in Plate 19a; the essential difference in structure from the preceding types is that instead of end drawers in the body there is a recessed cupboard underneath with doors.

A third characteristic type of writing furnture is

seen in Plate 18b. It consisted of a table with a separate body set upon it, very much in the manner of the earliest harpsichords. It was evidently intended as a portable or field secretary that could be closed up and readily moved from place to place. The example shewn dates from the sixteenth century but the type, in all likeli-

Fig. 5.—Fifteenth Century Writing Cabinet
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

hood, was in use much earlier. When closed, the secretary part is merely a rectangular box. The front let down affords a place to write; the small drawers accommodate writing materials and papers; the top thrown back makes the drawers perfectly accessible. The table supporting this piece belongs to the seventeenth century.

The falling-front secretary is a piece of writing furniture of ancient lineage, for the fifteenth century certosina example, shewn in Plate 20a is sufficient witness of antiquity. The whole front of the upper body,

when let down, gives an ample space to write at without cramping the legs of the writer; in the lower body is an ample cupboard.

Close akin to the foregoing is the sixteenth century secretary with receding underbody, carved scroll brackets and an array of small drawers, enriched with intricate *intarsia,* filling the space of the upper body. This exceedingly elegant piece of writing furniture, shewn in Plate 20b, is of the early sixteenth century.

The flat-topped *bancone* (Plates 18a and 19b) seems to have fallen gradually out of fashion during the progress of the sixteenth century, and likewise the type with recessed cupboard and doors (Plate 19a), their places being taken by either desk-like secretaries with slanting tops or else some form of high cabinet with an adequate arrangement of small drawers and cupboards within easy reach directly in front of the writer.

With the exception of the *certosina* falling-front secretary and the richly wrought *intarsia* example, it will be noticed that the earlier writing furniture illustrated was of plain walnut with very reticent mouldings and very little carving. Even the Umbrian *bancone* (Plate 18a) with scale carving on the ends, is a comparatively plain and simple piece. This simplicity and dignity were thoroughly characteristic of most of the Early Renaissance writing furniture. During the High Renaissance writing tables, writing cabinets, secretaries and the like became far more ornate in their

decoration and a wealth of carving was not seldom lavished upon them.

TABLES

Next to chairs, tables are, perhaps, the articles of furniture most sensitive to changes of style and the quickest to reflect any new impulse of fashion. In this respect the tables of the Renaissance were no exception to the rule. The tables of both the Early and High Renaissance were of all sorts and sizes and began to shew a marked tendency in their several types according to the uses for which they were designed. Furthermore, it is possible oftentimes to distinguish in their contours and decoration the local preferences that determined their characteristics. The tables of Tuscany and Umbria reflected those ideals of purity in line and just proportion cultivated by the people of those provinces; the tables of Liguria, on the other hand, gave plain evidence of the taste for intricate carved ornament and elaborate decoration always entertained by the splendour-loving Genoese, while the early tables of the Veneto shewed not a few traces of the Northern influence in the manner of their carving.

The tables of both the Early and High Renaissance may be divided into the following general classes. There were short rectangular or square tables; long rectangular tables for dining and general purposes, their length and width varying greatly, and usually spoken of as "refectory tables" when they were very

A. Late Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Walnut *Bancone* or Writing Table, Tuscan or Umbrian
Courtesy of Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia and New York City

B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Writing Cabinet (Probably Tuscan)on Seventeenth Century Walnut Stand of Spanish Influence
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

A. Early Sixteenth Century Tuscan Walnut Writing Table on Runner Feet, with Drawers and Cupboard Underneath. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

B. Late Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Tuscan Walnut *Bancone* or Writing Table
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

PLATE 20

A

B

A. Fifteenth Century North Italian Walnut Writing Cabinet with *Certosina* Decoration, Falling Front and

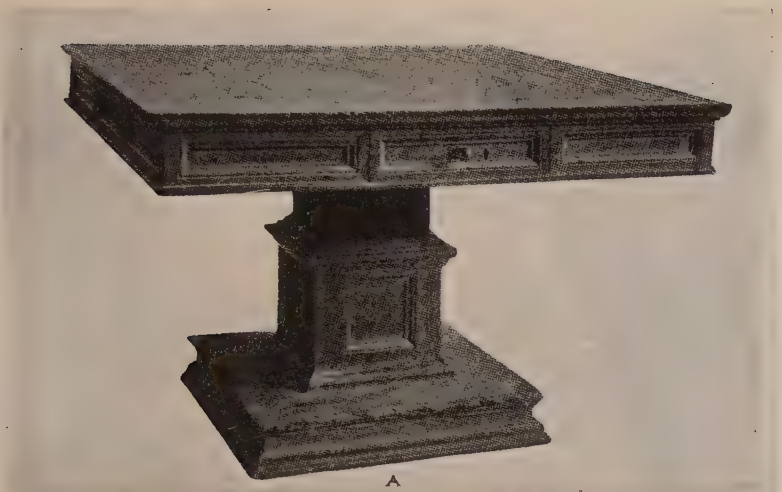
A. Late Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Small Rectangular Walnut Table with Hutch Base, Tuscan or Umbrian
Courtesy of Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia and New York City
B. Early Sixteenth Century Tuscan Walnut Table with Truss Ends, Stretcher and Moulded Runner Feet
Courtesy of Enrico Testa, Florence

A. Fifteenth Century North Italian Folding Walnut Table, *Certosina* Inlay, and Unattached Trestle Base
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Sixteenth Century Ligurian Carved Walnut Table with Turned Columnar End Supports and Carved H Base
Courtesy of Enrico Testa, Florence

A. Sixteenth Century North Italian Long Rectangular Table, with Six Square Legs, Brackets and Stretchers. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

B. Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut Tuscan Long Table with Stretcher and Carved Truss Ends with Lion Feet
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City



A

B

A. Late Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Small Square Walnut Table, Tuscan, with Square Pedestal Base. From Volpi Collection
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

B. Sixteenth Century Roman Octagonal Table, Carved Walnut with *Intarsia* Inlay
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

long and rather narrow in proportion to their length; medium-sized square, round, octagonal or hexagonal tables supported on either pedestals or legs and standing out in the rooms as independent factors in the furnishing equipment—the Renaissance forerunners of the Victorian "centre table"; and, finally, a variety of small " occasional" tables, usually rectangular and either with or without drawers.

Of the short rectangular or square tables illustrated, that shewn in Plate 21a comes very close to the *bancone* or writing table in the manner of its make-up. With its hutch or cupboard in the bottom part it would have been possible to use it as a writing table or secretary quite comfortably. This type belongs to the late fifteenth or very early sixteenth century. It exhibits the channelling or wide fluting at the edge of the top thoroughly characteristic of tables of that date. The shaped, incurving hutch door, letting down by hinges at the bottom, is a feature that would not have been found much later and is reminiscent of mediæval tradition. The solid truss end supports, the moulded plinth and feet, are also indicative of the period and either Tuscany or Umbria as the place of origin.

Perhaps the most archaic type of the small rectangular or square table is that represented by the fifteenth century *certosina* table (Plate 22a) with an hinged or folding top supported by a removable and adjustable X trestle. The convenience of a table of this sort is perfectly patent; when not needed, both

top and trestle could easily be folded up and put away in a small space, and yet when the table was opened out it was substantial in structure.

A table with a top of about the same dimensions, and belonging to the same small rectangular or square class, but having a permanent structure in the form of two truss supports connected by a stretcher, is shewn in Plate 21b. Both in the small rectangular or square class and in the longer dining or refectory type, the tables supported on truss ends connected by a stretcher might have the stretcher low down near the ground, midway up, or rather nearer the top; and the stretcher might be a plain, straight piece of wood or it might be shaped in various ways. Again, as the sixteenth century wore on toward the maturity of the High Renaissance, the stretcher might display a good deal of carved enrichment. A number of the later tables with truss supports dispensed with the stretcher altogether. A number of the fairly early truss end tables had drawers, especially those of small or medium-sized tops (Fig. 6b).

Yet another early type of table, falling within the small rectangular or square class, is the fifteenth or early sixteenth century Ligurian example shewn in Plate 22b. Tables with this H form of support might have either shaped and carved truss end supports rising from a moulded base or plinth or columnar end supports, carved or turned, rising from the moulded base, while the central support connecting the two ends con-

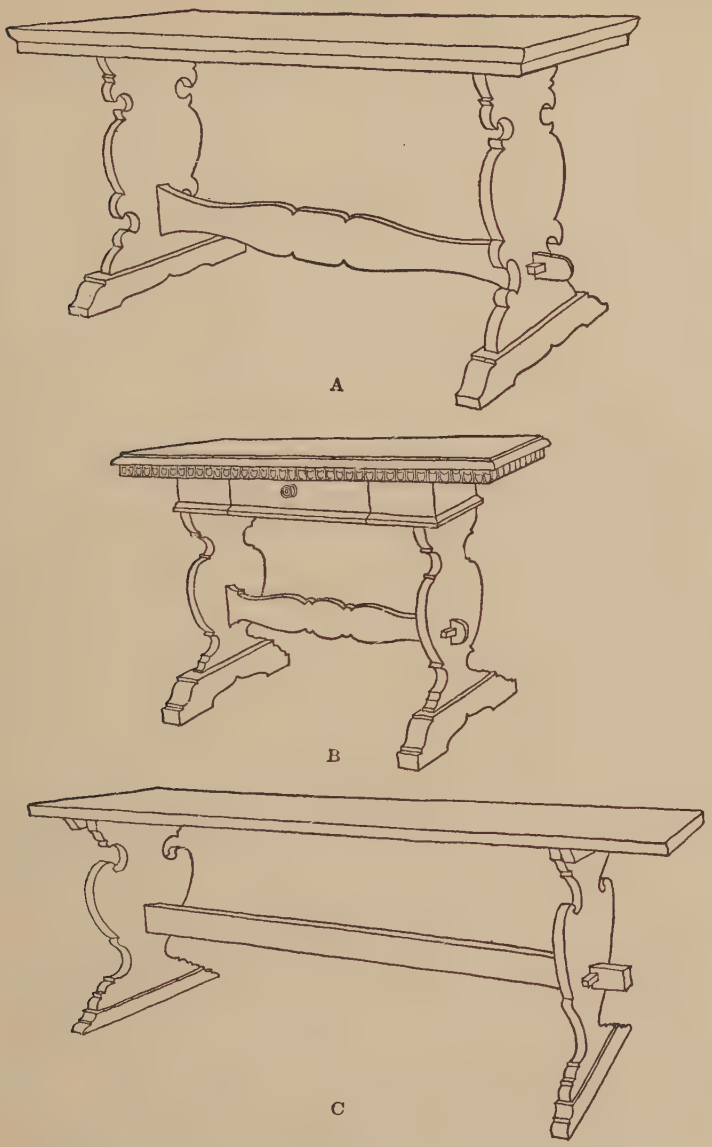


Fig. 6.—Early Sixteenth Century Tables with Truss Ends and Stretchers

sisted of columns, carved or turned, rising from a cross continuation of the moulded base. This moulded base or plinth might or might not terminate at the outer ends in couching lions or some similar carved feature. When the couching lions are present they may be regarded as indicative of Lombard or Northern influence. The table shewn in Plate 22b further exemplifies the Ligurian taste for intricate carving dominant at a very early period.

A fourth variety of table in the small square or rectangular class had four stout legs connected near the floor by four equally stout stretchers. The legs terminated in moulded bases into which the stretchers were housed. There might or might not be shaped brackets (Plate 23a) in the angles where the legs joined the stretchers and the underframing. Likewise, the underframing might or might not contain a drawer. Tables of this same general structure were also frequent in the longer dining or refectory type; in the latter case, however, they often had six (Plate 23a) or even eight legs, four at the ends and the others set in between, at each side, so as to equalise the support. Tables with this form of structure really belong more to the sixteenth century than they do to the fifteenth. They were common to Tuscany, Umbria, Lombardy and Emilia but appeared elsewhere as well.

The longer dining, general purpose or refectory tables were constructed with truss end supports, carved

(Plate 23b) or plain (Fig. 6c), connected by a stretcher or without the stretcher. When the stretcher was omitted the trusses were of heavier proportion than otherwise.

These longer rectangular tables were likewise made with truss or columnar end H supports rising from a moulded base, in the manner indicated by the shorter Ligurian example shewn in Plate 22b. There were sometimes drawers in the underframing of long tables of this character, but in many cases the decoration of the apron (Plate 22b) was uninterrupted by drawer fronts, and if drawers were inserted their fronts were made continuous in pattern with the rest of the surface of the apron.

Last of all, as just stated, these longer rectangular tables were often made with four or more stout square legs connected by stout stretchers close to the floor which provided convenient foot rests, as their almost invariably well worn condition testifies.

These longer general purpose tables, when not used for dining, very often stood against the walls of large rooms and, in that capacity, more or less served the purpose of lengthened consoles or cabinets and smaller cabinets, boxes, candlesticks, books, flower jars and other objects of ornament or occasional use were placed upon them.

The small free-standing tables with square, round, hexagonal or octagonal tops, the precursors of the

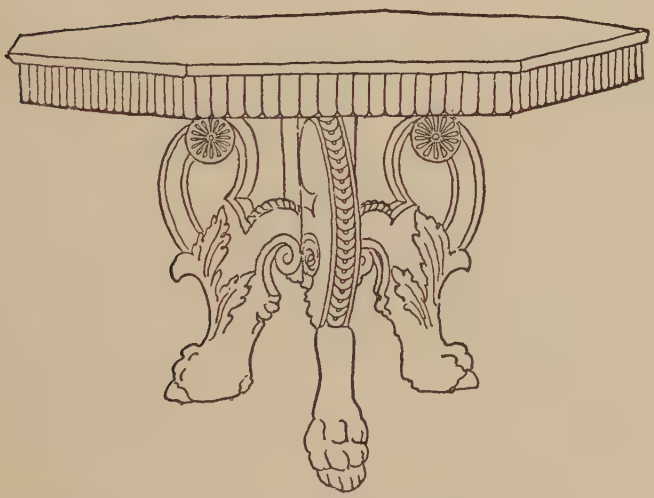
later "centre table," were supported on square, moulded pedestals (Plate 24a) rising from a broad moulded platform base, like the fifteenth century example shewn in the illustration; again, they sometimes had four legs with a square underframing and the legs were connected all round by stretchers, exactly in the same manner as the small square tables.

Furthermore, not a few of these tables had three vigorously carved scrolls as a support, in the manner shewn in Fig. 7a and b; a modification of this method of support consisted of a robust and strongly carved central pedestal rising from a moulded base which occasionally rested on three paw feet or claw feet. Tables of the two latter-mentioned types belonged more to the middle of the sixteenth century than to the earlier years.

The octagonal table (Plate 24b) with eight lion-footed legs, and elaborate *intarsia* enrichments on top, apron and legs, is a variant example of polygonal-topped table and, at the same time, affords a splendid instance of fine design and mastery of decorative craftsmanship characteristic of the High Renaissance.

The edges of table tops in the very early period were plain or slightly moulded; the next step shewed an incipient apron with broad flutings or channellings; later, the fully developed apron made its appearance, with varied forms of decoration (Plates 23a and b). During the High Renaissance the mould-

A



B

FIG. 7.—Early Sixteenth Century Centre Tables with Triple Scroll and Paw Supports
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

ings of table edges were frequently enriched by fine carving (Plate 23b.)

CHAIRS AND STOOLS

Chairs were not numerous in the fourteenth century and the early part of the fifteenth, even taking into account the rude rush-seated chairs without arms and the folding beechwood monastery chairs seen in some of the pictures painted at the time, and it was not until the fifteenth century neared its middle stage, or even a little later, that their number made chairs a fairly considerable item of furnishing equipment.

The comparative fewness of chairs, however, did not mean that there was any lack of seating accommodation. The *cassoni,* stools and benches, as already pointed out, served the purpose in very large measure and, so far as decorative values were concerned, they received far more attention than anyone dreamed of bestowing upon chairs at that time.

Before the *Cinquecento* the most important and characteristic kind of chair was the folding armchair of the X or "scissors" type which, towards the end of the fifteenth century (Plate 26b) received its due measure of embellishment. One form of the X armchair was the so-called "sedia Dantesca" (Plates 26b and 33c); the other was the so-called "sedia Savonarola" (Plate 25c).

As a matter of fact, the really correct name for both the so-called "sedia Dantesca" and the so-called

A

B

C

A. Early Sixteenth Century Walnut Chair, Square Seat and Square Back Covered with Red Velvet. B. Early Sixteenth Century Square-backed and Square-seated Walnut Armchair with Runner Feet, Covered with Red Velvet
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

C. Two Fifteenth Century Tuscan *Sedie del Campo* of the Type Called *Sedia "Savonarola"*
Courtesy of N. H., Ridolfo Peruzzi, Marchese de' Medici, Florence

A

B

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut Armchair Shewing Strong Spanish Influence, Carved Front Stretcher, Square Back and Square Seat Upholstered with Red Velvet Quilted
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Late Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Walnut *Sedia del Campo* with *Intarsia* Inlay and Red Velvet Brocade Seat and Back Rest, of the Type called *Sedia* "Dantesca"

"sedia Savonarola" is *sedia del campo* or *field chair*. These *sedie del campo* were called by that name because the seats were so constructed and the framework so put together that they folded up like the familiar modern campstool. Being readily portable when folded up, they were carried on campaigns and into the fields for the use of military commanders and other exalted personages. These chairs were likewise commonly used by the Florentines for resting, dining, writing and reading.

The best chairs of the "Dantesca" variety were made of walnut and the seats and backs consisted of pieces of leather, velvet or brocade stretched and fastened in the manner shewn in the picture. The framework might be plain, decorated with *intarsia* bandings (Plate 26b) enriched with *certosina* inlay, or carved (Plate 33c). The arms ended either in a simple knob or whorl or else in a carved head or some similar device.

In some of the later Dantesca chairs the backpiece, instead of velvet, brocade or leather, was made of walnut, rising into a cresting, and carved. This variation, of course, was of very late date and does not occur with chairs of the best period. As the sixteenth century advanced the Dantesca chair frames were apt to display far more carved ornament than at an earlier date.

While the finest of the "Savonarola" chairs were made of walnut, other woods were much more likely to

be used than for the closely related Dantesca. The number of staves in the Savonarola chair varied; the other structural variations appear in Plate 25c.

The toes of the runner or sleigh feet, as also in the *sedia Dantesca,* were very often carved and the top-rail or backpiece, in some cases, as well as being shaped likewise displayed carving. Fifteenth century chairs of this type were almost invariably plain, however, and when any amount of carved decoration occurs it is almost indubitable evidence of more or less late sixteenth century origin. Loose cushions were often used on the seats of the Savonarola *sedie del campo.*

Another substantial fifteenth century seat was the " tub " or barrel chair of the sort shewn in Fig. 8a, a seat of straightforward, simple construction, considerable grace of aspect, and not lacking in comfort. The space beneath the seat was arranged as a cupboard. The chair was without any attempt at ornament other than the panels and the mouldings defining them, along with the moulded base. Such chairs might be made of walnut but were quite as likely to be made of beech or pine.

There are very few of them still remaining. The most noted and the one least restored, perhaps, is that at Camaldoli in which the monks sate to be shaved and tonsured. The Camaldoli tub chair was, in fact, the monastic barber's chair and, incidentally, a far better looking object than the complex "contraption" generally used by the barber of to-day.

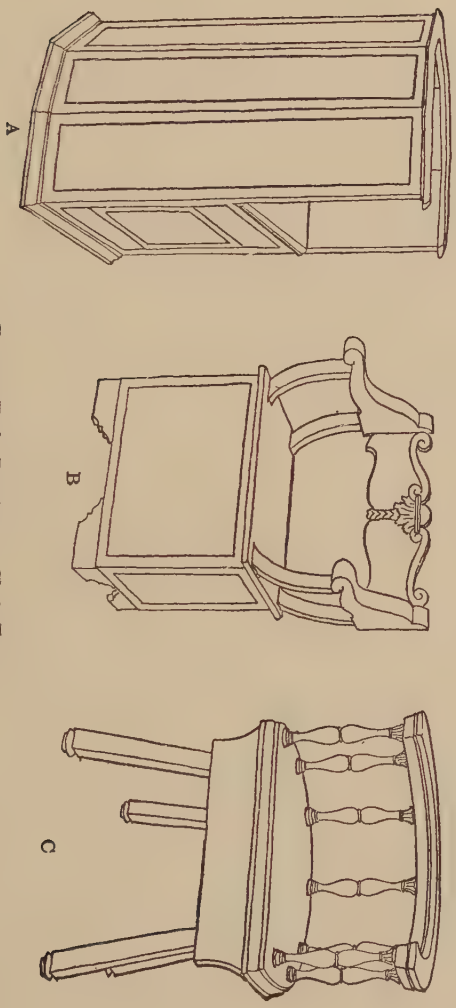


Fig. 8.—Early Renaissance Chair Types
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

Amongst the fifteenth century chairs must also be included the folding seat with a back and no arms (Fig. 9a) of the type often used in monasteries. It was made of slats or staves held together by runner feet, the edge of the seat and the toprail of the back, the staves being pivoted together at the point of crossing. The back was formed by the prolongation of one set of staves. Such chairs were generally made of beech or pine.

There were also round chairs with four legs, with a round seat and a low circular back composed of turned spindles supporting a semi-circular toprail like the chair shewn in Fig. 8c. Another type of chair, akin in its upper part to the *sedia del campo,* had a square box base, the seat being hinged so that the lower closed-in part became in effect a small chest (Fig 8b).

Yet another type of seat in more or less common use during the fifteenth century was the *sgabello* or stool chair (Plate 33b; Fig. 9c), which was really a sort of glorified milking stool with an high back. The *sgabello* was a small seat, without arms and without legs, but supported on two solid pieces of wood in the manner shewn (Plate 33b and Fig. 9c).

The rear support continued above the seat and formed the back, and sometimes there was a small drawer beneath the seat (Fig. 9c). The usual back was fan-shaped or approximately triangular in form (Plate 33b), although a somewhat earlier form was shaped as in Fig. 9c.

Sgabelli were commonly made of walnut, and during

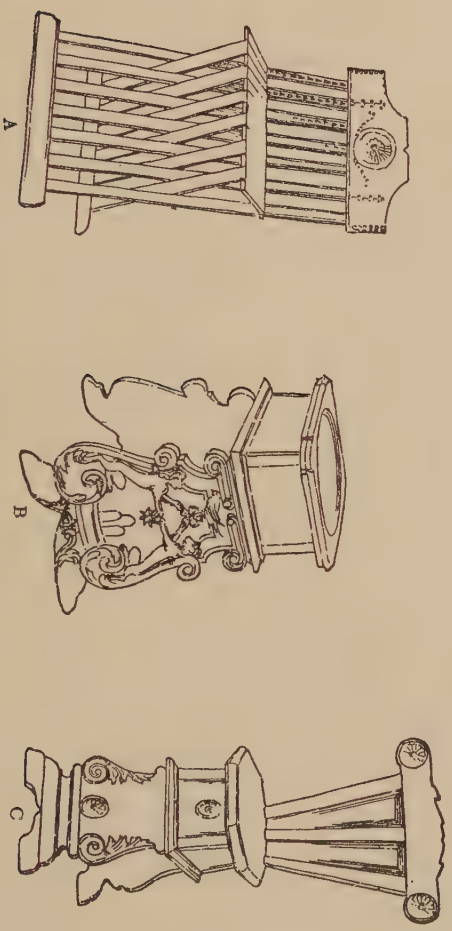


FIG. 9.—Early Renaissance Chair and Stool Types
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

the fifteenth century exhibited comparatively little carved decoration. In some instances, however, they displayed considerable *intarsia* enrichment. *Sgabelli* with elaborate carving and ornately shaped backs (Plate 33b) belonged to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and generally lacked whatever grace there was in the fifteenth century forms.

Akin to the *sgabello* was the *panchetto* (Plate 34c), a three-legged chair with a small seat and a shaped back closely resembling the shaped backs of the earlier *sgabelli*. As the *panchetto* was a very early form of seat with a mediæval ancestry behind it, it is not at all unlikely that its back suggested the earliest *sgabello* backs. The back of the *panchetto*, whether it was made of walnut or of some other wood, was often enriched with gouge or chip carving.

In the sixteenth century chairs became increasingly numerous. The high and straight-backed armchairs, with straight arms, runner feet, square seats covered with velvet, and a square piece of velvet stretched between the backposts, are one of the types we always associate with this era. This kind of chair probably made its appearance at the very end of the fifteenth century, but it was not at all in general use at that time and was certainly neither numerous nor characteristic, as were the other forms already described. It really belonged to the sixteenth century when it was one of the most representative types of seating furniture.

There are some who think these chairs look uncomfortable. They *are* uncomfortable if not used aright. They were designed to be used with footstools or with cushions for the feet to rest upon, and when so used they are exceedingly comfortable.

These square-seated, square-backed chairs (Plate 25a and b) occurred both as armchairs and as side chairs. The four square legs were supported on runner or sleigh feet at each side, usually with carved toes. The legs were braced by substantial stretchers which varied somewhat in their arrangement. The front legs continued above the seat and became the armposts, supporting thin, straight, broad flat arms. In the earlier forms the armposts were plain and square; in later types they were baluster turned. Chairs of this type were also made without runner feet, the four legs standing on the ground in the usual manner.

The continuations of the back legs formed the backposts, there being a slight rake from the seat upward. Some of these chairs, both arm and side, had backposts surmounted by inverted acanthus scrolls carved and gilt (Plates 25a and b); others had no acanthus finials for the backposts, the velvet or leather upholstery being carried square across the top.

In many cases these chairs had an apron of velvet carried all the way around and extending almost half way down the leg. Some of the later chairs of this same family had a broad fretted or carved stretcher

between the two front legs, rather more than half way up from the floor to the seat (Plates 26a and 34a).

A variation of this same general type of chair, which appeared about the middle of the sixteenth century, had slightly shaped arms terminating in carved whorls or scrolls or heads (Plate 26a), the front legs were fluted all the way up to the arms or otherwise decorated, and the broad stretcher between the front legs was given greater decorative prominence. Sometimes the velvet upholstery of the back and seat was quilted down into a small lozenge pattern. This type of chair reflected some Spanish influence which made itself felt in Tuscany with Cosimo de' Medici's taking to wife a Spanish princess.

Another development of the square-seated, square-backed armchair, and side chair of like design, may be found in the type from which the runner feet have disappeared. The legs are turned and braced with a full complement of turned stretchers (Plate 25a). In the armchairs the armposts, which are continuations of the front legs, as previously, are turned, and the turned arms terminate in balls or in carved heads. Very often there is a square cushion of upholstery extending along part of the arm. The square backs may have carved or turned finials on the backposts, but are more likely to be without. Chairs of this description are on the middle ground between the High and the Late Renaissance so that it is rather difficult to say in just which period they should be placed.

Stools were used from a very early date and continued to be numerous throughout the sixteenth century. Made of walnut, as many of them were, they often exhibited an abundance of carving (Plates 34c and Fig. 9b). Sometimes there was a drawer under the seat, and the seat was small. The carving was on the front and back supports. The late stools differ from the early stools only in the amount and character of the carving. To all intents and purposes, the stools were merely backless *sgabelli*.

THE LATE RENAISSANCE

BACKGROUNDS OF THE LATE RENAISSANCE

WHAT was said of the backgrounds of the Early and High Renaissance applies with almost equal force to those of the Late Renaissance. It must be borne in mind, however, that along with the restrained furniture mouldings, the delicate *intarsia* bandings and the sumptuous *certosina* inlay for all sorts of cabinetwork, the old geometrical wall painting had passed quite out of fashion and pictorial wall painting had altogether supplanted it. It must be remembered, too, that the increased taste for luxury had fostered the fashion of covering whole wall surfaces with rich damasks, brocatelles and brocades, while the coffered and deeply carved ceilings glowed with colour and gold.

Architecturally there was little change to chronicle that had any significant bearing on the interior backgrounds, save the particulars already mentioned. In writing of the Renaissance, John Addington Symonds says:

"The speech of the Italians at that epoch, their social habits, their ideals of manners, their standard of morality, the estimate they formed of men, were alike conditioned and qualified by art. It was an age of splendid ceremonies and magnificent parade, when the furniture of houses, the armour of soldiers, the dress of

citizens, the pomp of war, and the pageantry of festivals were invariably and inevitably beautiful. On the meanest articles of domestic utility, cups and platters, door-panels and chimney-pieces, coverlets for beds and lids of linen chests, a wealth of artistic invention was lavished by innumerable craftsmen, no less skilled in technical details than distinguished by rare taste."

While much of this encomium could be justly applied to the Late Renaissance, nevertheless a change was becoming apparent in certain particulars. It could scarcely be said with truth in the latter years of the sixteenth century that *all* the works of the craftsmen were "distinguished by rare taste." Oftentimes there was a self-conscious straining for originality and novelty, a visible effort for effect. The old spontaneity and vitality, that so strongly characterised the Early and High Renaissance, in some quarters had patently begun to decay while from others it had utterly disappeared. We find pretentiousness rampant and the erstwhile exuberant quality of inventiveness numbed and muffled. The deadening touch of Spanish political influence had caused a blight. Creeping paralysis seemed to have attacked surfeited imagination, overelaboration had cloyed, and purity of design was being suffocated in the weedy overgrowth of a style fast running to seed.

All the same, in the dying years of the Renaissance there were many vivid bursts of splendour, and much of what was fine in the earlier epoch held on with little serious change until an wholly new order came to rule

the day. In many respects the difference between the High Renaissance and the Late Renaissance is a difference in spirit rather than a difference in letter. This difference can be appreciated by an examination and comparison of the work better than by volumes of description.

FURNITURE

ARTICLES OF FURNITURE IN USE

The articles of furniture in ordinary use during the Late Renaissance were virtually the same as those in use during the former period. There were some changes in form in the same articles, and some new developments of use, perhaps, but the old classification still held good.

MATERIALS

Walnut remained the staple wood of which most of the furniture was made, with the poplar, beech, elm and pine for furniture of the commoner and cheaper sort. As carving had become the paramount form of decoration, there was little occasion for the employment of pine or cypress as a foundation for either painted or *pastiglia* decoration, although some pieces of furniture other than *cassoni* were wholly gilt and the softer woods were often chosen as a base in such cases.

CONTOUR AND STRUCTURE

The furniture of the Late Renaissance remained wholly rectilinear in both contour and structure, with a strong horizontal emphasis. The element of curving

lines came no more into play than it had during the Early and High Renaissance. The old "boat-shaped" *cassoni* (Plate 2a) were no longer made, so that bit of curving contour was eliminated. The "sarcophagus" shape (Plate 5c), however, continued in high favour and we find it used not only for *cassoni* but also for the seat bases of high-backed throne seats, *cassapanche* and armless benches.

There was no very perceptible increase in the height of cabinetwork; most pieces remained fairly low. There was, however, a lessening in the architectural quality of much of the furniture and a more florid and sculpturesque character made itself increasingly manifest. Michelangelo's tombs of the Medici had set an example which impelled all the designers and makers of furniture to emulation in heroics.

DECORATIVE PROCESSES

Carving was the chief decorative process of the Late Renaissance. *Gilding* figured to some extent, certain pieces of furniture being wholly gilt and others parcel gilt as an extra embellishment to the carved walnut, but *painting* had now become of relatively little moment. *Intarsia* and *certosina* work had not entirely disappeared, but they were on "their last legs," so to speak, and counted for very little. The process and principles of *pastiglia* work were never laid aside nor forgotten, but the old *pastiglia* splendours, already illustrated and described (Plates 1, 3b and 4a) were

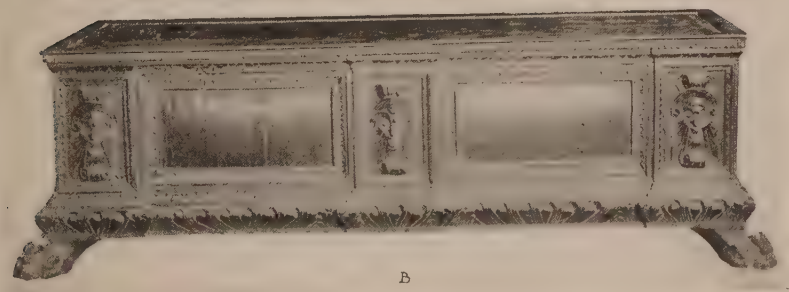
now a thing of the past. Everything was subordinated to carving.

Carving. Nearly all the carving of the Late Renaissance was either in *mezzo-relievo* (Plate 29a and b) or in high relief, with frequent excursions into the round (Plate 31a and 31b). Michelangelo's infectious example of figures in the *Sagrestia Nuova* and Benvenuto Cellini's success in bronze sculpture had inspired all the woodcarvers with an obsession for human figures as part of the repertoire of furniture adornment. A good example of this tendency may be seen in Plate 31a. However questionable may have been the taste displayed in some of the carved decoration, its technical excellence for the most part was beyond criticism.

The old process of incised or gouge carving (Plate 5b) was, to all intents and purposes, quite obsolete. Chip carving was employed in a minor way, but chiefly for the ornamentation of peasant chairs like those shewn in Fig. 9a or for the backs of *panchetti*.

Intarsia Work. *Intarsia* decoration was still occasionally practised but only in a restricted way and with *motifs* quite different from those which the earlier *tarsiatori* had lavished on their creations. The naturalistic flower sprays on the legs of the table in Plate 32c are skillfully executed but their style is totally unlike the *intarsia* decorations of the earlier furniture. The table in question, so far as its form is concerned, really

A

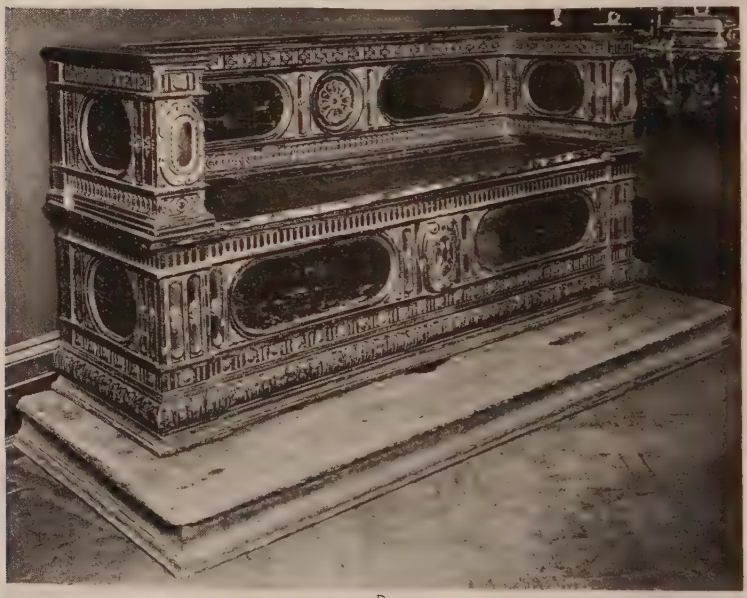


B

A. Late Sixteenth Century North Italian Carved Walnut *Cassone* Accented with Gilding
Courtesy of George Howe, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Late Sixteenth Century North Italian Carved Walnut *Cassone*

A



B

A. Late Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut *Cassapanca* with Shaped Arms and Receding Base. B. Late Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut *Cassapanca* with Shaped Panels
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

A

B

A. Late Sixteenth Century Walnut *Credenza* with Carving Characteristic of the Period. B. Late Sixteenth Century Walnut *Credenza*, Mouldings Surrounding Door Panels Enriched in Typical Late Manner

Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

A

B

A. Late Sixteenth Century North Italian Walnut Two-bodied Cabinet, Upper Body Stepped Back in Characteristic Manner
B. Late Sixteenth Century Two-bodied Writing Cabinet, Carving *Motifs* Typical of Period
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

PLATE 31

A

B

A. Late Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut Writing Table, Supported by Pairs of Figures in the Round. B. Late Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut Writing Cabinet (Upper Part)
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

A. Late Sixteenth Century North Italian Walnut Table with Square Legs and Stretchers. B. Late Sixteenth Century North Italian Small Square Table, Square Legs, Stretchers and Fretted Brackets. C. Sixteenth Century Walnut Table with Columnar Legs, Stretchers and Inlay in Late Renaissance *Motifs*
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A

B C

A. Late Sixteenth Century Walnut Chairs with *Intarsia* Decoration on Panels of Backs and Stretchers. B. Late Sixteenth Century Walnut *Sgabello* with Fretted Back and Typical Late Renaissance Carving. C. Late Renaissance *Sedia del Campo* with Carved Enrichment and Stamped Leather Seat and Back

Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A. Late Renaissance Walnut Armchair, Shaped Arms and Fretted Front-stretcher
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

B. Late Renaissance Iron Chair with Moulded Brass Knobs

C. Late Renaissance Walnut Stool and North Italian Carved Walnut *Panchetto* with Chip Carving Decoration
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

belongs to the High Renaissance; its decoration is that of the Late Renaissance.

Certosina Work. *Certosina* work during the Late Renaissance was a negligible element in the catalogue of decorative processes. Very little of it was done—barely enough to keep alive the knowledge of the craft. And yet the method of bone inlay for the decoration of furniture, although in an altered form, was to come back again at a later date with highly effective results.

Turning. Turning was extensively employed, especially for the legs of chairs and tables and also for the spindles of chair backs and the backposts and arms of armchairs. Some of the Late Renaissance chairs owed their grace almost entirely to the skill and judgment with which the turning lathe was used.

Gilding. Although the process of *pastiglia* decoration as previously practised no longer played a significant part in the ornamentation of Italian furniture, substantially the same method of *gesso* coating and building up with the brush the more delicate elements of a design continued in vogue for gilded furniture like some of the bedsteads and cabinets belonging to this era.

Leather and Fabric Covering. The use of stamped leather and of woven fabrics for covering the seats and backs of chairs increased not a little during the Late Renaissance. All the tastes of the period tended toward splendour and the gorgeous damasks and brocades, particularly those from the looms of Venice and

Genoa, helped to make the furnishing sumptuous to the highest degree. Cabinets and small secretaries were often covered with stamped or carved leather and the same material was employed for the seats and backs of some of the chairs. The employment of stamped leather for such purposes had increased since the previous period.

TYPES OF DECORATION

Amongst the *motifs* of decoration those of Gothic origin were no longer to be found; the geometrical patterns remained, of course, but they were emphasised only in the manner in which they were part and parcel of the Classic repertoire. All the Classic vocabulary of ornament in vogue during the High Renaissance was restained and further *motifs* of Classic derivation were incorporated, along with sundry features of naturalistic character.

Grotesque masques (Plates 27b and 28a), terminal figures (Plate 29a), caryatids, cherubs, *putti* (Plate 31a), human figures, animal figures and chimæras, in the round or in various degrees of relief, made their frequent appearance in the carved decoration of furniture. Terminal figures, caryatids and full length human figures nude often took the place of pilasters (Plate 31b) or the vertical panels enriched with delicate arabesques, so much employed at an earlier date, and we find human bodies, heads and masques made the centre (Plate 30b) and starting point of flowing arabesques and heavily foliated scrolls.

The carvers had almost completely forsaken the old traditions of "goldsmiths' work" that had imparted such rare delicacy and grace to the ornament of the Early and High Renaissance and now they were bent upon emulating the bolder handiwork (Plate 31a) of the sculptor. This change was concurrent with a grosser, more restless and over-elaborated conception throughout the province of decoration.

The incidents of carved ornament that recur constantly throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century include *cartouches, guilloche* bands, the *overlapping coin motif, strapwork, C* and *S scrolls, elongated* or *elliptical rosettes,* modified *lozenge* forms, *roundels* for frieze ornaments, *turned ornaments half-round* or *split* and applied in the Flemish manner, *pilasters* and *columns tapered toward the base,* turned *knobs* or *roundels in the centres of panels, cabochons, angel* or *cherub heads* with *wings attached, masques with pendent draperies, leaves and fruit, grotesque heads* and *naturalistic swags* composed of *miscellaneous small items drawn from the animal and vegetable kingdoms.*

There should also be included amongst the types of decoration the *varied shaping of panels* (Plates 27a and 28b), the *raising of panels* by building up the surrounding mouldings (Plates 29b and 30b), the intricate *carved enrichment of mouldings* (Plates 29b and 30b), often in close succession, *raised bevelled panelling, bold torus base moulds fluted or gadrooned* (Plates 27a, 29b and 30b), *canted lion paw feet* (Plate 29) support-

ing cabinetwork, *panels with arched tops, canted* and *rounded corners,* and *baluster turning.*

Much of the decoration was coarsely conceived, overdressed and labouring under restless complications. At the same time, along with these shortcomings of cloyed design, there usually went exquisite modelling and every other indication of the carver's finished craftsmanship.

Mounts. For the pulls, keyplates, handles and other mounts of the furniture both brass and iron, beautifully wrought or moulded, were used.

Finish. As in the previous period, the usual finish for the walnut furniture was an occasional application of olive oil followed by rubbing down with a soft rag. Wax was employed in comparatively rare instances.

CASSONI OR CHESTS

During the Late Renaissance the *cassone* continued in general use but it began to be less ubiquitous than in earlier times and its rôle was getting less important. During all the preceding periods it had served so many varied purposes, besides doing its own particular duty as a receptacle for the keeping or storing of all sorts of goods and chattels, that it was one of the most indispensable articles of furniture in every household. Now, however, that there were getting to be so many more specialised pieces of furniture, with highly specialised uses, the natural outgrowth of an highly elaborated state of culture that blithely created com-

plexities, there was less need for the *cassone* and its numbers gradually diminished.

The old boat-shaped *cassone* had entirely disappeared from the horizon; so, also, had the *pastiglia* decorated *cassone,* the painted *cassone* and the *cassoni* enriched with *intarsia* and *certosina* decorations. Even for the embellishment of isolated panels *intarsia* was used hardly at all.

When sharper decorative accent was desired than could be given by carving alone, it was not at all unusual to gild parts of the carving, as may be seen in Plate 27a. Ordinarily, however, carving and sundry arrangements of panelling, along with suitably composed mouldings (Plates 27 and 28), satisfied the tastes of the period in the decoration of *cassoni.*

While the *cassone* with straight sides and flat top (Plates 27a and b) remained in favour, there was also a very general liking for the sarcophagus shape which particularly appealed to contemporary tastes.

CASSAPANCHE

The *cassapanca* maintained its place as an important and imposing piece of seating furniture. In contour it remained virtually unchanged from the *cassapanche* of a long time before. But if we compare the *cassapanche* of the Late Renaissance with those that were thoroughly characteristic of the High Renaissance, we shall find very marked differences in the manner of decoration and the appearance of the carv-

ing. The *cassapanca* is a good example of the fact that it is often impossible to differentiate between Late Renaissance and High Renaissance pieces judging by contour and structure alone; time and again one can tell only by the manner of the decoration—that is to say, the *motifs* that occur, the way in which they are composed, and the character of the carving. This frequent difficulty in distinction, and this test affect much of the cabinetwork of the period and not *cassapanche* only.

The *cassapanca* in Plate 28b, so far as the general characteristics of contour and structure go, might readily be attributed to the early part of the sixteenth century; the masque arm ends, the raised mouldings defining its panels and, to some extent, the gadrooned base proclaim it as product of the *Late* Renaissance. So, likewise, the recessed or sunk panels with carving in bold relief, and the masque and acanthus arm ends mark a very similar *cassapanca* as belonging distinctly to the last half of the sixteenth century.

Again, the raised mouldings and the masque-decorated arm ends of the *cassapanca* in Plate 28a stamp it with the impress of the Late Renaissance, while there is no mistaking to what precise epoch pertain the oblong oval panels of the example appearing in Plate 28b.

CREDENZE

The *credenza* was too useful and appropriate a piece of furniture for it soon to go out of fashion, even in a restless age when fashions were changing more

or less rapidly and special pieces were being devised for new uses.

The *credenze* of the Late Renaissance were apt to be moderately short two-door or three-door structures, unlike some of the earlier and longer *credenze,* and less

Fig. 10.—Sixteenth Century *Credenzino*

ponderous than many of the early pieces. Some of them, furthermore, had drawers in the bases.

Another characteristic of Late Renaissance *credenze* was that they very generally had brackets—usually acanthus or heavily moulded brackets—on the apron or frieze above the doors, at the ends and marking the divisions between the drawers (Plates 11a and b). When their fronts displayed pilasters, the plinths

supporting them frequently broke out from the base and the mouldings of the frieze broke out above them.

Their carved decoration, too, displayed in marked degree all the characteristics mentioned in the foregoing section on *cassoni*. The *credenza* shewn in Plate 29a, with its caryatid boys instead of pilasters, its lion masques, and its repletion of carving, is a very good representative example of the late sixteenth century manner. The gadrooned base, the sunburst roundels on the ends, and the panelled doors with prominently raised mouldings, seen on the *credenza* in Plate 29b are all thoroughly typical of Late Renaissance usage.

The *credenzino*, a very low, very short and shallow *credenza* about three feet high and twenty to twenty-six inches wide, enjoyed great popularity during the Late Renaissance period. With its cupboard below and its drawer above, it was convenient for holding all sorts of things, and its general proportions fitted it to serve the same purpose as a console, of which, indeed, it was an early form (Fig. 10).

BOOK-PRESSES, ARMADI AND CABINETS

In the flux of fashions and specialised forms that marked the second half of the sixteenth century, the functions and forms of certain hitherto distinct types of cabinetwork underwent a process of amalgamation or merging of one into another. Sometimes the functions of two erstwhile unrelated pieces were combined in one body which thus came to serve a double purpose. It is convenient, therefore, to consider Late Renais-

sance *armadi,* book-presses or bookcases, and cabinets under one general heading. The same piece might be partly *armadio* and partly bookcase, or partly bookcase and partly secretary. Indeed, the bureau-bookcase, in its familiar eighteenth and early nineteenth century arrangement, may be said to date from this era.

Owing to this fusion of functions, and the way in which structure and contour were modified in consequence, the only hard and fast distinction to be made in this heterogeneous group of cabinetwork is between pieces of *one* body and pieces of *two* bodies. In other words, if a piece had a clearly defined upper portion, separately articulated and virtually independent of the lower portion in structure and purpose, it was said to have two bodies.

The division between lower and upper bodies was marked by the arrangement of the mouldings and other features of the design, *at least;* one of the more characteristic peculiarities of Late Renaissance design and structure, however, was that the upper body was perceptibly stepped back from the lower body. This stepping back of the upper body might be only in front, or it might be both in front and at the sides, as in Plate 30a.

In the division of the two-bodied piece of cabinetwork both the lower and upper parts might consist of cupboards closed in by pairs of doors; there might be a cupboard with doors in the lower part, and the upper part might have drawers; or, again, this last named

division might be reversed so that there would be doors above and drawers below.

The cabinet-bookcase with closed cupboard and wooden doors below and glass doors above to close in the book shelves, is a good instance of the two-bodied cabinet whose upper body is not conspicuously stepped back from the lower, although the general design makes it perfectly plain where one ends and the other begins. The more favoured fashion of the period, however, was to accentuate the stepping-back in the manner seen in Plate 30a.

The *armadio* or hanging cupboard, as a pattern of contour and structure, was apparently not so much esteemed as the cabinet of two bodies. It was still made and used, but the two-bodied rival outdistanced it in popular favour. The *armadio* in Plate 30a exhibits clearly the contemporary characteristics of carved decoration and likewise that phase of representative structure and style.

WRITING FURNITURE

While the writing furniture of the Late Renaissance shewed no lack of variety, the trend of preference seems to have been toward the cabinet type with two bodies—either drawers or, more commonly, a cupboard with doors in the lower part (Plate 30b) while the upper part had doors (Fig. 11a) closing in the tiers of small drawers, pigeonholes and the like or else was fitted with a drop or falling front (Plate 30b).

The tall two-bodied writing cabinet or secretary in

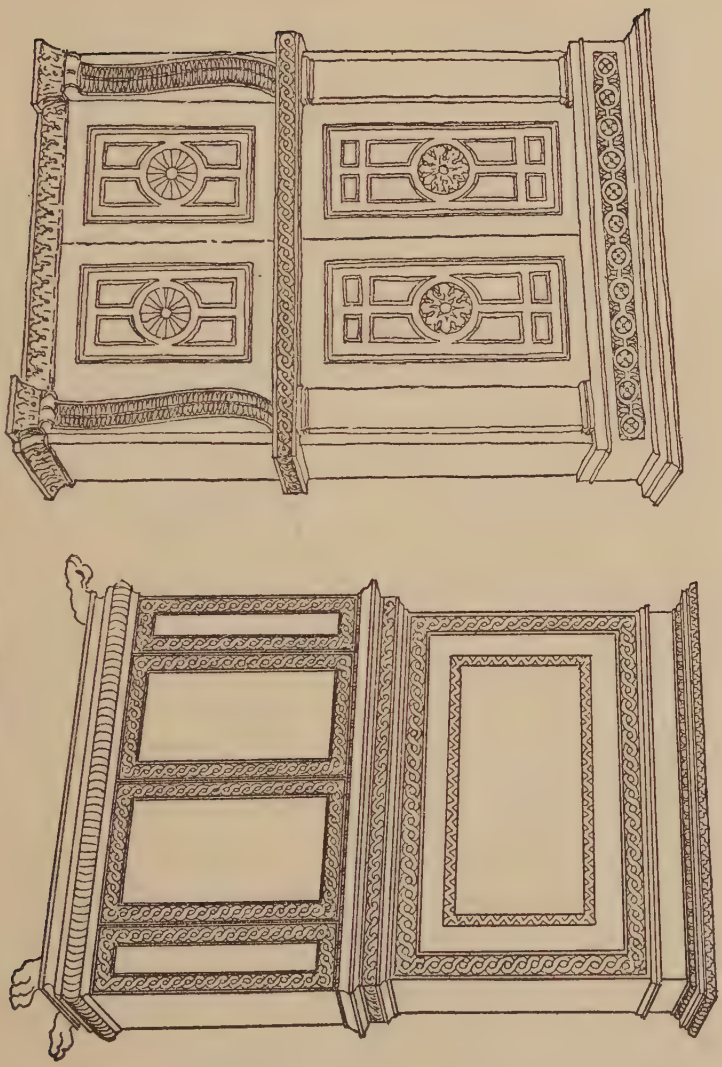


FIG. 11.—Late Sixteenth Century Writing Cabinets

Plate 30b, in point of decoration and technique of carving really ought to be classified as a product of the High Renaissance; in point of contour and structure it is typical of the Late Renaissance manner.

The drop or falling-front writing cabinet in Fig. 11b is representative of the late Renaissance both in its structure and arrangement and also in the fashion of its decoration with panels bounded by raised and enriched mouldings.

Another type of late sixteenth century secretary consisted of a table or stand upon which the cabinet with its array of small drawers for papers and documents is set. The style of carved ornament exhibited by both parts is altogether characteristic of the florid methods of the time. The upper cabinet shewn in Plate 31b is intended to be used in this same way, placed on a table or stand.

Still another distinctively Late Renaissance type is the table-like secretary, supported by *amorini* in lieu of legs (Plate 31a), with the middle part contrived as a slant-top desk; when the lid of this desk is raised, a well with shallow drawers is opened to view. The carving of this writing table, which is exquisitely executed, is representative of the best manner of the Late Renaissance both in the *motifs* employed and in the craftsmanship.

BEDSTEADS

The platform bedsteads or bedsteads raised on a dais, like that in Plate 17, no longer appealed to the tastes of those who determined the fashions prevailing

in the end of the sixteenth century. The type appeared cumbersome and doubtless would have seemed to occupy too much space in a fully furnished bedroom of the day; a still greater objection lay in its plain-panelled surface and austere lines which gave no scope for the

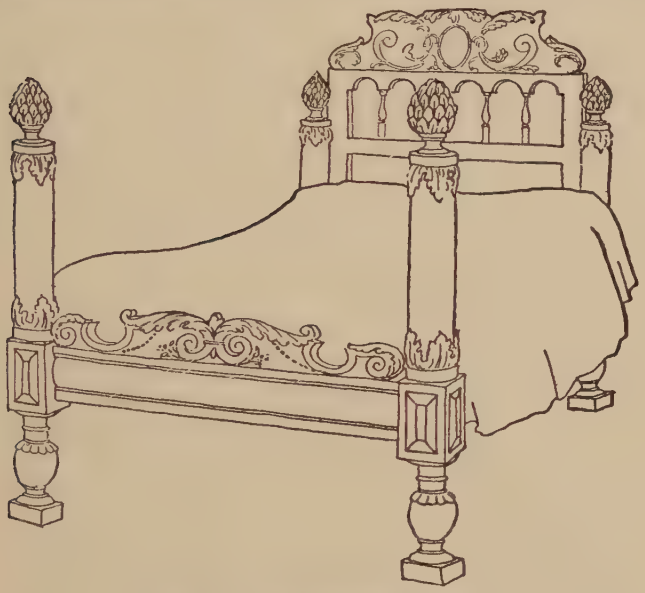


Fig. 12.—Late Renaissance Bedstead
Courtesy of American Art Galleries

florid carved decoration in bold relief so much in current favour.

A bedstead like that in Fig. 12, which afforded almost unlimited opportunity to the carver to display his handiwork, was much more in keeping with the tastes of the period. Headboard, footboard and posts all invited carved decoration and turning, and each item received all it could stand. Bedsteads of this type with

half-length posts were made sometimes with footboards, sometimes without. The carving lavished on them was of the same kind as already discussed in connexion with other pieces.

High-post bedsteads, with testers and curtains, were likewise in common use; their popularity really never waned till after the beginning of the nineteenth century. The high-post bedsteads had no footboards, so that all the carved decoration had to be put on the headboard and the four posts. These posts were often carved or turned in spiral flutes or in spirals or bolder and more open lines. Again, when there were no spirals, the posts would be loaded with foliage, fruits and flowers in strong relief.

TABLES

The tables of the Late Renaissance continued to be made with substantially the same structure and contour as those typical of the High Renaissance; the manner of the carved decoration adorning them was the only particular in which there was a perceptible difference. The same sort of profuse carving in high relief, to which attention has already been called in connexion with other sorts of furniture (*e.g.*, Plate 31a), was very generally applied to tables also (Fig. 13).

Tables with lavishly carved truss ends and H bases supporting them faithfully represented a typical mode of table design in the late sixteenth century; the

fashion of the structure was identical with that in earlier examples (Fig. 14).

The one exception in the way of tables that seems to have been wholly free from the blight of overdone

Fig. 13.—A. Late Renaissance Truss End Table. B. End View of Same

and needlessly complex carved ornament is that type of table shewn in *a* and *b* of Plate 32. This kind of table, though not closely restricted locally, was peculiarly characteristic of Bologna and those parts of Emilia and Tuscany not far distant from Bologna where it seems to have been more commonly used than elsewhere. The type occurs both as the long table with four or more legs, connected by stretchers, and as the

smaller square or slightly oblong table of four legs, likewise joined by stretchers. It is really the one species of Late Renaissance table in which all the

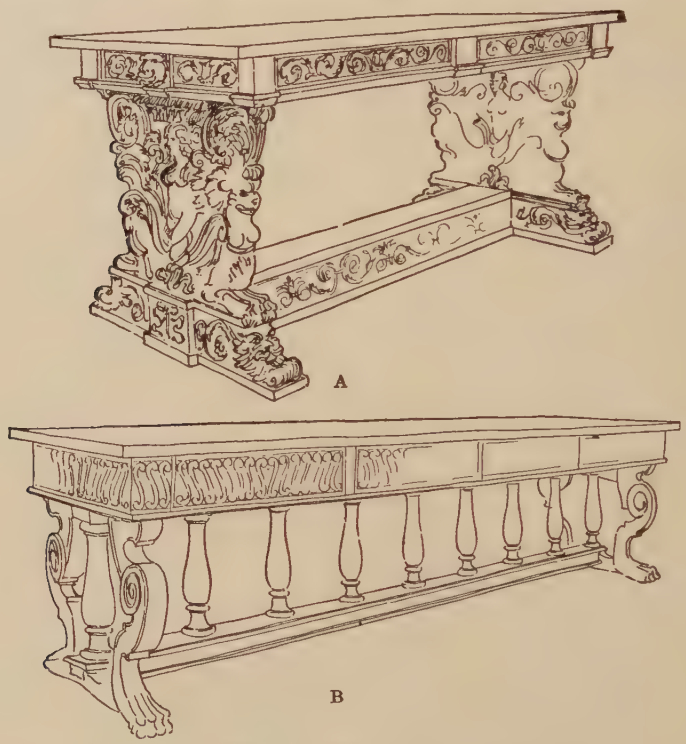
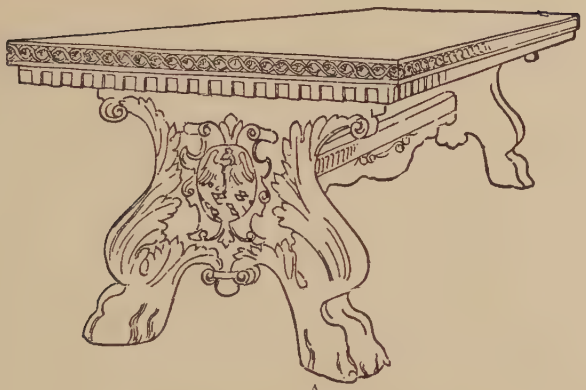


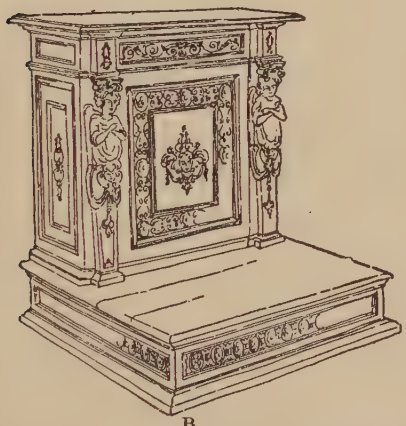
Fig. 14.—A. Late Renaissance Table. B. High Renaissance Table

common-sense and self restraint of the period seem to have been centred.

The small walnut table (Plate 32c) enriched with delicate *intarsia* work shews what graceful and well-balanced work could come from this period of redundant and sometimes hysterical decoration when there was the will and the good taste to execute it. The



A



B

C

Fig. 15.—A. High-Late Renaissance Truss End Table. B. Late Renaissance *Prie-Dieu.* C. Clothes Hanger

contour of the table and the delicate restraint of the ornament are those of the High Renaissance; the *motif* of the decoration is essentially that of the Late Renaissance, though kept within bounds.

CHAIRS AND STOOLS

The chairs of the Late Renaissance reflect faithfully the tendencies of the period in a peculiarly sensitive way, as is the wont of chairs.

One type of chair thoroughly characteristic of its period is that sort of which two examples are shewn in Plate 33a. The little carved scrolls or scrollets surrounding the oblong *intarsia* panels of the back and stretcher are often suggestive of strapwork and indicate the incipience of a familiar Baroque *motif*. While sound of structure, chairs of this type appear to have lost much of the vigour and robust character of the earlier type from which they were obviously derived. The dimensions of the different members are somewhat pared down, it is true, but the main source of decadence is to be found in the too florid and finicky ornament. There is no repose of line anywhere.

The same fault of overdone ornament is to be seen in the case of some of the "Savonarola" SEDIE. The contour and structure of these chairs are the same as those of their prototypes (compare with chairs in Plate 25c), but crested backpieces or toprails, with intricate carving and medallions, disturb and cheapen

their whole aspect and mark them unmistakably as products of the Late Renaissance.

The old square-seated and square-backed armchair of the early sixteenth century is represented at the end of the century by elaborations consistent with the taste of the day. For example, the front legs, instead of extending straight up to the arms as formerly, bulge out just above the front stretcher into caryatid-like consoles, fully covered with carving, which end in heads just under the arm. The arm is shaped and has carved ends, and the broad front stretcher bears a quantity of carved adornment reflecting the fashion of the period. Plate 34a shews another late sixteenth century variation from the old square-seated and square-backed type of chair shewn in Plate 25. The example in 34a exhibits a somewhat different treatment of arms and fretted front stretcher, as well as another but equally typical arrangement of the other stretchers; the two types described should be compared.

The side chair shewn in 35a is yet another typical product of the late sixteenth century. The gilding of carving was, of course, practised during the High Renaissance, but it was always done with extreme reticence. On the old square-backed and square-seated armchairs, the acanthus scroll finials on the backposts were commonly gilded; but that was all the gilding that appeared. With the Late Renaissance type of chair shewn in 35a the gilding is lavishly applied at every

possible spot, and this alone would indicate its period. Furthermore, the rustic scrolls in the back and stretcher are distinctive of the late sixteenth century, as well as the whorled finials of the backposts.

The wrought-iron and brass-mounted X chair (Plate 34b) belongs to a type never as numerous as some other sorts of chairs but a type that was more or less in general use during the sixteenth century. Its appearance may, in all likelihood, be ascribed to the High Renaissance but, as it was more commonly met with in the late sixteenth century, it is classified with the Late Renaissance chairs which sadly need its quieting influence to balance some of the vagaries they occasionally exhibit.

The *sgabello* of the Late Renaissance (Plate 33b) was like its predecessors of the same species except that it was covered with the sort of carving typical of the period and the shaping of its cresting and back often exhibited more complexity of line. The *sgabello* of this epoch was so absolutely *covered* with carving from top to bottom that the only part of it *not* carved was the seat, and there would be no particular cause for surprise if a specimen were to turn up some day with the seat carved also. Perhaps one reason why the *sgabello* retained its popularity was that it gave such an admirable opportunity for the display of carving. In some instances the back was fretted (Plate 33b) as well as carved.

The related stool chair or *panchetto* of the period (Plate 34d) kept its old contour and structure—sometimes there were a few additional flourishes to the outline of the back—but it reflected contemporary carving manners in the amount of decoration it bore. Its seat *could* be and often *was* carved.

Stools (Plate 34c and Fig. 9b) remained physically unchanged; superficially they were mirrors of the carving mania.

THE BAROQUE AGE AND ITS SEQUEL

BACKGROUNDS OF THE BAROQUE AGE

THE foregoing title is comprehensive and covers a long period of time. It includes not only the Baroque seventeenth century but also the eighteenth century up to the beginning of the Neo-Classic epoch. In other words, it includes the purely Baroque period, as that term is generally understood, and also the Rococo episode along with all that went between when the curvilinear element in furniture design became dominant and when, in England, the Queen Anne, Early Georgian and Chippendale fashions—in reality the offspring of the Baroque movement—were supplying *motifs* that found their counterparts in Italian versions strongly affected by their example.

In the seventeenth century "fireplaces and doorways claimed no less decorative emphasis than they did in the previous periods, but the manner of expressing that emphasis was changed. Stone served the utilitarian purposes of construction, but when it came to the exercise of embellishment we find another medium very frequently preferred. That medium was stucco or plaster . . . The preferences of taste in the seventeenth century prescribed that where the stonecarver had hitherto been wont to display his cunning in the graceful enrichment of doorways and fireplaces, the plasterer or *stuccatore* should now ply his art.

"It was not only the fireplaces and doorways upon which the *stuccatore* disclosed his fertile ingenuity and

mastery of hand. The medium that proved so alluring and so ready of manipulation for these features was likewise turned to account in a far broader field. Walls and ceilings alike bourgeoned forth in an opulent luxuriance of flamboyant tendrils, leafage and flowers interspersed with looped draperies, amorini, vases and urns. The same accommodating material served for the craftsman to model pediments, busts, emblems of divers sorts, and sundry architectural adjuncts to dignify the overdoor spaces; from the same obedient composition he likewise moulded great cartouches with armorial bearings and all the attendant panoply of mantlings and interlacing strapwork.

"Brick flooring of the kind before described was still used to a great extent. Stone, marble and tiling were likewise employed and were often so disposed as to produce no inconsiderable diversity of colour and pattern. Terrazzo, too, proved itself a medium of numerous possibilities and with it the ready-witted craftsman managed to execute results that were effective alike in colour and design. Parquetry floors, also, must be numbered amongst the resources at the disposal of the seventeenth century architect.

"The old beamed and painted ceilings, and the ceilings with lunette vaulting and pendentives, had yielded place to the coved ceiling whose shape gave freer scope for the inventions of the *stuccatore* and also provided a less broken field for the execution of the type of frescoes in accord with the genius of the period. With the dominance of the coved ceiling came also an elaboration of the plaster cornice which provided a definite boundary line between the space overhead and the walls.

"When the walls were not adorned with elaborate stucco conceits, with hangings, or with rich fabrics applied to their whole surface, they offered an excellent ground for frescoes or paintings. When some large and important religious, allegorical, mythological or historical subject was not depicted, or when the space was not given up to a symmetrical array of arabesques

after the school of Berain, the painter not infrequently laid off the surface of the wall in panels and therein pourtrayed hunting scenes or pictured the villas and gardens of the neighbourhood . . . Here, again, it was no unusual thing for the plasterer to shew his hand and model fanciful frames of plaster on the walls to enclose the pictures, so that one feels he is almost omnipresent and is tempted to style the seventeenth century the 'plastic period' or 'The Age of Plaster.' . . . Adroit as many of these intricate plaster decorations were in execution, and excellent as their modelling often was, the innate Italian love of colour sought satisfaction in applying pigment and gilding to the forms produced by the *stuccatore*. Some of the results effected by this means were truly admirable and of imposing magnificence; others were overdone and merely 'splendacious'; others, again, afforded amusing instances of how the stucco craftsman, led astray by the dangerous and tempting facility in manipulating a new-found toy, might be betrayed into startling absurdities . . .

"The doors of this period, no less than those of a preceding age, offered an inviting field to the decorator and some of the results achieved in this direction were really admirable in their effect. On one side, panels enclosed by heavy mouldings often contained small landscapes of excellent quality; on the other, the plain battened surface was covered with an engaging pattern of foliage and birds.

"In this period, too, must be noted the prevalence of large and richly framed mirrors, intricately devised sconces with crystal pendants, and imposing crystal chandeliers which occupied places of honour in the centres of lofty hallways or *saloni*.

"The movable furniture was no less impressive in character than were the fixed surroundings. The greatly increased use of upholstery and voluminous hangings at doors and windows augmented the note of grandiose brilliance which, in turn, was enhanced by the heavily carved and gilt frames of the large pictures

with which the walls were often hung. The *cassone* was no longer a favourite and much used piece of furniture, but its place was taken by a multitude of costly cabinets, escritoires, and wardrobes, while the seating accommodation that it had erstwhile afforded was supplied by innumerable chairs, and settees or sofas, many of which were upholstered in gorgeous damasks or with stamped leather. At the same time, an wholly new vocabulary of decorative *motifs*, or new adaptations of old ones, imparted an aspect to seventeenth century rooms utterly dissimilar from those of the Renaissance epoch."

(*Villas of Florence and Tuscany*, Eberlein:
J. B. Lippincott Co.)

So much for the seventeenth century background. When we come to the background characteristics of the early and middle eighteenth century most people look for something altogether different. As a matter of fact, however, in Italy the actual difference of setting was far less than might be expected. There was no such widespread access of new domestic building as there was in England. For the most part, people were content to go on living in the houses their families had already occupied for many years. When any new houses or *palazzi* or villas were built, or when people who were not content with their old surroundings indulged in interior remodelling, the decoration was carried out in a manner more or less consistent with the modes prevalent in England and France, for it was to England and France that Italy looked for most of its style inspiration at this time, a fact to which attention has previously been directed.

While the usual high Italian ceiling generally remained, even when the older houses underwent some degree of remodelling, the height of the ceiling was sometimes brought down by putting in a false ceiling so as to make the proportions of a room conform more closely to the increasingly intimate character of contemporary furnishing and decoration. In the houses built at the time the rooms had much lower ceilings than formerly.

The *Chinoiseries* of the early eighteenth century were as warmly welcomed in Italy as they were in England or France. In Italian decoration the door was always a favourite subject for embellishment, and during the period of Chinese ascendancy the doors of the smaller and more intimate apartments that had now come into fashion were gorgeously painted, lacquered and gilt in the Chinese manner. Shaped panels with a gold ground bore a gay assemblage of mandarins, bridges, pagodas, bamboo trees and Oriental blossoms in gay colours; doors with Chinese-shaped quatrefoil or lobate panels bore gold Oriental *motifs* on a black lacquer ground. And so one might easily go on enumerating at length the many Oriental conceits that helped to fill the Italian decorative repertoire of the first half of the eighteenth century.

The art of the *stuccatore* had proved too accommodating and flexible a resource during the seventeenth century to be allowed to fall into disuse. *Stucchi* or plaster decorations, therefore, are to be found on

every hand in the eighteenth century interior. In the *Practical Book of Wall Treatments*, by Nancy McClelland, Plate IV shews the polychrome plaster relief decorations in the dining-room of the Villa Lazzara-Pisani at Strà. In this eighteenth century interior, the ground of the walls and ceiling is of smooth white plaster. The strapwork pattern of the dado, the moulding above it, and the scrolls, bands, birds, foliage and flowers of the field of the wall are all in relief and are gaily coloured. The plaster relief of the ceiling is coloured in the same way as the walls.

Another room in this same villa has low-relief Chinese *motifs* spotted at regular intervals over the surface of the wall, with more fully organised Oriental designs enclosed in rustic panels as overdoor decorations. In this room the flat wall surfaces are a red lavender or mulberry colour while all the stucco reliefs stand forth in a paler lavender. The hallway, on a ground of pure white, smooth plaster, has a green strapwork dado while the field of the wall has panels, bands and garlands of stucco ivy leaves coloured green and extending up to a green cornice. Any number of similar coloured stucco wall decorations are to be found, but these instances serve sufficiently to indicate one type of mural background highly popular at the period and exceedingly effective.

With wall-paper in great favour both in England and in France, it was cordially received in Italy and used with very happy results. Oftentimes rooms in

the older villas and palaces were papered from floor to ceiling or from dado to ceiling with the painted wall-paper imported from China in small sheets. The ground was usually white or a light silvery grey with a perceptible sheen and the decorations painted on it were bamboos, flowers and the other characteristic *motifs*—familiar from their constant recurrence on porcelain and screens—either distributed in an open, all-over pattern or gathered in closely organised, symmetrical units. Even more generally used were the printed and painted wall-papers imported from France, and papers of this description seem also to have been decorated in Italy for the writers have now in mind one paper with a bright yellow ground and a pattern of many-coloured flowers, very evidently of Italian and not French technique.

Printed linens and chintzes, too, took their place in Italian decorative schemes as they had done in England and France, and both materials were used for panelled wall coverings as well as for hangings and upholstery.

It is well to keep in mind this fact. The late seventeenth century and the first quarter of the eighteenth formed a period of flux and transition between the full-bodied and stately Baroque style, at one end, and the blithesome informality and gayety of the Rococo at the other. All the phases of furniture style in England from the Restoration to the period of Chippendale ascendancy mirror the successive stages of this evolu-

tion. The same thing was true in France. The Baroque style was limbering up and gradually getting to the point where it frolicked off into Rococo. Decoration and furniture both give their incontestable testimony to what was actually going on. English furniture design of the Restoration epoch was fundamentally and thoroughly Baroque. William and Mary furniture gave evidence of more or less limbering and lightening up and the entrance of elements of diversity. Queen Anne and Early Georgian furniture shewed further and marked progress in the course of change. By the time we reach Chippendale's adaptations of Louis Quinze models the metamorphosis is complete. In France the curved line began to assert itself vigorously long before the death of the Grand Monarque, although its structural significance was slight. During the *Régence* the curved line attacked and made a conquest of structure, and the proportions of structural members lost some of their robust heaviness. After Louis the Well Beloved ascended the throne the sinuous curve and dainty elegance of proportions, both in structure and ornament, revelled in complete and unchallenged triumph. The gravity of the Baroque style, with its straight structural lines and its splendid curves of decorative amenity had been transformed, through ubiquitous curves and lessened bulk, into the sprightly mirth of the Rococo episode. The starch and crinoline were all gone. The Baroque pavane had yielded little

by little to the minuet, and the minuet had soon capered off into the Rococo gigue.

And what was true in England and France was no less true in Italy. The stilted grandeur of the Baroque seventeenth century gave place to the blander graces of the eighteenth by parallel stages. Indeed, the change began before the end of the seventeenth century as it did in England and France also.

This transformation was directly and mainly due to French influence and example. Although English influence and fashions were not altogether negligible in the early part of the eighteenth century—we can see evidences in the Italian fiddle-back and spoon-back chairs and hooded bureau-bookcases closely analogous to Queen Anne forms—French fashions were paramount and English fashions did not count for a great deal till the middle of the century when the passion for the *giardino Inglese* swept over the country. English fashions reached the height of their effect in Italy late in the century during the Neo-Classic era. French modes, however, from the very outset of the revulsion against Spanish dominance in style, were openly and avowedly the source whence all inspiration flowed.

Turin, Milan, Bologna, Parma, Mantua, Ferrara and Venice all took to the French styles kindly and, indeed, quite naturally. Their renderings of the French modes in furniture lacked none of the spirit and spontaneity of the originals and often excelled them in interest. Genoese interpretation of things French—

thanks, probably, to a residuum of Spanish stiffness—were apt to be dry and perfunctory. Florence, with her great traditions of the Renaissance, had never accepted whole-heartedly the spirit of Baroque design in either architecture or furniture. Her efforts at Baroque always looked thin; they lacked life and body. Florentines were too much governed by intellect ever to let themselves go with that emotional abandon the Baroque style inexorably demands, the abandon that gave the Roman Baroque its splendid vitality and made it the success it is. If they could never fully accept or sympathetically interpret the Baroque, much less could they assimilate with enthusiasm the Rococo manner or work in it with joyous freshness. Rome held out for a long time against the blandishments of the newer fashions and then, at last near the middle of the century capitulated before the irrepressible gayety of the Rococo style. But acceptance and emulation are two very different things; Rome never worked freely or successfully in Rococo vein.

FURNITURE

CASSONI AND CHESTS

During the Late Renaissance the *cassone* was gradually becoming less and less indispensable to the completeness, comfort and convenience of the well furnished Italian interior. Its function as a receptacle was rapidly being supplanted by a variety of cabinets, cupboards and cabinets with drawers; its function as

a seat or bed, when it had a flat top, was less and less in demand as bedsteads increased in number and seating furniture increased both in number and variety.

During the Baroque seventeenth century the *cassone* was even less necessary than it had been towards the end of the sixteenth. Nevertheless, it continued to be made in limited numbers, but most of its old glory was gone. It was no longer the subject of the craftsman's best efforts. In all likelihood, most of the *cassoni* made at this time were intended for marriage chests and their utilitarian aspect was more considered than their decorative value. Furthermore, they were far more apt to be required by the plainer people, who were always a bit old-fashioned in their ways, than by those who punctiliously kept pace with the modes of the day.

A seventeenth century *cassone* with lid painted inside was evidently one of these marriage chests belonging to the humbler sort of folk. Its absolutely plain, box-like exterior, and the reversion to an ancient type, seen in the runner feet with carved toes, indicate its probable fashioning by a provincial craftsman still under the influence of a tradition that had become well-nigh obsolete. The painted and gilt decoration, and the mirror, inside the lid, however, are unmistakably in the northern manner of the seventeenth century and conclusively date the piece.

The south Italian (possibly Neapolitan) chest or

casket with an arched lid, inlaid or veneered with black and white in a geometrical pattern and adorned on the front with an engraved bone panel, shews a strong Spanish influence both in its shape and in the manner of its decoration.

The strong box or treasure chest of walnut, with intricate locks and elaborately fretted wrought iron mounts also points to Spanish influence in design and workmanship alike. The fretted iron mounts are almost purely Spanish in type and reminiscent of Spanish usage of an hundred years or more earlier; the general structure and the character of the moulded base, however, are those of the early seventeenth century.

BENCHES

The *cassapanca* could scarcely be called a popular article of furniture in the *Seicento*. Its appeal was fast waning during the Late Renaissance. If benches of its type were still being made—which is doubtful—they were few in numbers, for the less cumbersome long sofa, vastly more comfortable and convenient, appeared at this time and ousted it from its erstwhile position as a seat of honour. As an hall seat there was no particular demand for it, for hall benches of a type more in accord with the notions current at the time were being made:

The walnut baluster back bench (Plate 35b) with turned baluster spindles is a representative example

of one kind of hall bench that came into general use in the seventeenth century. The straight back was distinctly architectural in composition and was to all intents and purposes a wooden balustrade.

A kindred type of hall bench, made of walnut (v. Plate 62 *Villas of Florence and Tuscany*), had a solid panelled back, sometimes with a carved cresting rising from the centre of the toprail, and such backs usually had a slight rake. There was a straight apron beneath the solid seat, and the four, six or eight legs were turned.

Another type of hall bench popular at the period was the sort shewn in Plate 35a. It was made of pine or cypress and was intended to have painted decorations. These were sometimes very elaborate and were executed in the bold manner of the day. Armorial bearings, figures, mythological subjects or pastoral scenes usually formed the chief subjects of decoration and were depicted in full colours; the framing of scrolls and architectural *motifs* was painted in *chiaroscuro*. The back, which was generally raked, the seat, and the solid supports were all shaped in a manner to coincide with the painted decorations.

CREDENZE

The *credenze* of the period retained the same general contour seen in the *credenze* of earlier periods but exhibited certain minor differences distinctive of the age in which they were designed. Many of the *credenze*

A. Seventeenth Century Hall Bench with Shaped Back and Painted Decoration
Seventeenth Century Chairs with Rustic *Motif* in Backs and Stretchers
From Villas of Florence and Tuscany

B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Hall Bench with Turned Baluster Back
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut *Credenza*, Rounded Corners and Shaped Panel Decoration
B. Seventeenth Century Long Walnut *Credenza*, Typical Baroque Panelling
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Eighteenth Century Walnut Small *Credenza* of Louis XV Type. B. Late Seventeenth or Early Eighteenth Century Walnut *Credenza*, Canted Corners and Shaped Panels
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Seventeenth Century North Italian Walnut *Madia*, Arched Top, Fretted End Cresting, Typical Panelling and Brass Mounts
Courtesy of Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia and New York City

B. Seventeenth Century Walnut *Madia*, Flat Top, Moulded Base with Bracket Feet and Typical Baroque Raised Panels with Re-entrant Quadrant Corners

A. Eighteenth Century Bureau-bookcase, Roll-top Desk and Cabriole Legs. B. Eighteenth Century Bureau-bookcase, Shaped Front, Slant-topped Desk and Rococo Cresting
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

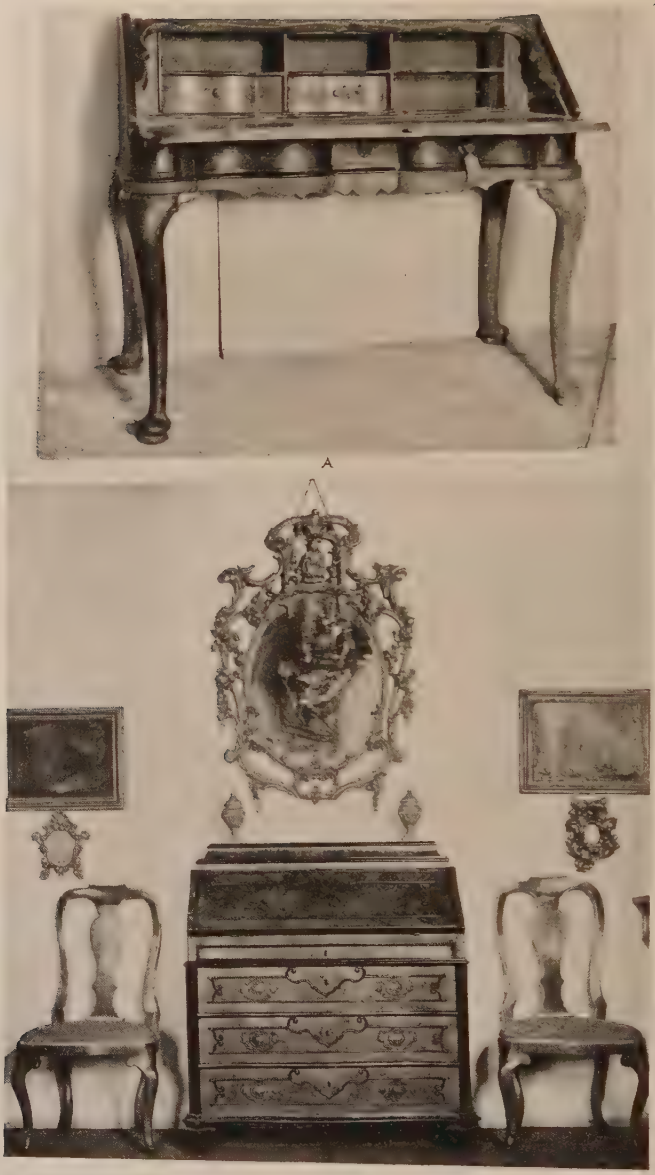
PLATE 40

A. Eighteenth Century Venetian Lacquered Bureau-bookcase, Slant-topped Desk and Glass-panelled Doors. B. Eighteenth Century Veneered Walnut Bureau-bookcase, *Intarsia* Enrichment, Slant-topped Desk and Wood-panelled Doors

Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

A. Eighteenth Century Venetian Painted Bureau-bookcase, Cut-out and Applied Decorations in Coloured Paper, Varnished. B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Bureau-bookcase, Mirror Panelled Door and Cabriole Legs

Courtesy of Wanamaker Stores, New York City



A

A. Eighteenth Century Slant-topped Walnut Secretary, Shaped Front, Cabriole Legs. B. Eighteenth Century Inlaid Walnut Secretary, Slant-top Shaped

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

remained of the same length as formerly, but there was a noticeable tendency in many quarters to decrease the length and somewhat increase the height in proportion to the length. The Bolognese *credenze,* with their simple panelling and brass studding were apt to run truer to the old type.

One conspicuous characteristic of the Baroque age was the fondness for elaborately shaped panels, either slightly raised from the body of the wood or formed by mouldings. The *credenza* illustrated in Plate 36a exhibits characteristic and elaborately shaped panels formed by mouldings; the type of design is far advanced in the transition stage towards Rococo, although the complete symmetry of the design and the meeting of the curves in points and angles are typical of Baroque usage. The shaped apron of the base is also characteristic of the period.

The panels of the *credenza* shewn in Plate 36b are raised from the body of the wood in the customary Baroque way and have the usual re-entrant quadrant corners; the panelling scheme is further worked out by the mouldings that form an outer boundary of the panels and give an opportunity for additional variety of shaping.

Another minor difference in contour often shewn by *credenze* of the Baroque period and the following transitional era is to be seen in the canted corners of the example in Plate 37b. Occasionally the corners

instead of being canted were curved so as to form quadrants on plan, these quadrants being either convex or concave and re-entrant. This mode of shaping the corners—either canting or curving—was not peculiar

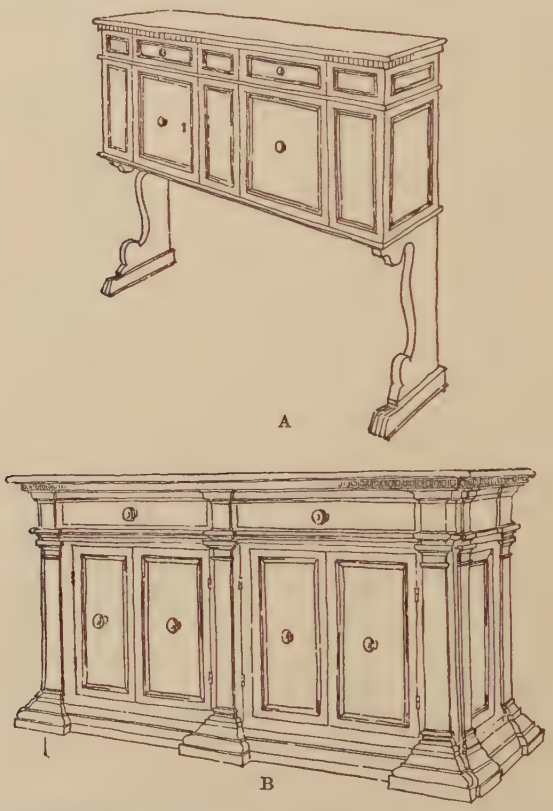


Fig. 16.—A. Early Seventeenth Century *Madia* of Hutch Type. B. Early Seventeenth Century *Credenza* with Plinth and Cornice Breaking Around Pilasters

to *credenze* but was shared more or less by many large pieces of cabinetwork of the period.

The small *credenza* in Plate 37a is purely Louis XV or Rococo in design. It also has the shaped corners.

The pattern of its panelling, the cabriole legs and the shaped apron at the bottom, however, are especially the features that establish its Rococo status.

Many of the seventeenth century Baroque *credenze* were exceedingly simple and direct in their design. The breaking of the plinth and the cornice around the bases and capitals of pilasters, when they occur, is rather typical of Baroque manner (Fig. 16b), although the practice is not confined to the Baroque age, as instances of it can be found much earlier.

MADIE

The *madia* or bread box was a capacious piece of cabinetwork part way between the hutch or cupboard and the *cassone* in its scheme of structure. It was intended to hold a considerable supply of long and large loaves of bread, hence its bulk. It was likewise designed with a view to decorative seemliness. It was a piece of furniture that had been a long time in use, but the examples dating from the late sixteenth century and the Baroque seventeenth century are the finest and most impressive.

One type of *madia,* of the hutch variety, was raised on shaped end supports (Fig. 16a) and its body had a number of doors. Above these doors there might or might not be several shallow drawers. The *madia* fortunately escaped some of the excessive decoration prevalent during the Late Renaissance, inasmuch as its functions had to do chiefly with the commissary de-

partment of the household and it was not considered a suitable vehicle for ornate enrichment. The example shewn in Fig. 16a is a good instance of the more restrained sort of cabinetwork that could come from the late sixteenth century when the instinct for complex decoration was held in check.

Another sort of *madia,* typical of the seventeenth century (Plate 38a), was ark or sarcophagus-shaped with a gabled or slanting top, and had panelled ends and sides. In this sort the slanted lids opened, raising up like the lid of a *cassone;* the sides and ends were fixed. The brass studdings or mounts on this specimen are characteristic of the Bolognese manner; this sort of surface enrichment was used for many other pieces of cabinetwork as well and was especially effective with dark walnut of fine quality and colour.

Yet another type of *madia* appears in Plate 38b. The whole top lifts up in the manner of a chest lid, and also the upper portion of the front is contrived so as to open. The *madia,* like all other pieces of fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century furniture in Italy, exhibited almost endless diversities of individual form within the same general type or family. The relief panelling with concave quadrant corners displayed by this example is thoroughly characteristic of the best seventeenth century manner.

During the eighteenth century the *madia* as a distinct genus of cabinetwork fell into disuse, although

earlier pieces very often continued to serve the purpose for which they were first made.

WRITING FURNITURE

During the seventeenth century the types of writing furniture that had been in general use during the Late Renaissance continued in popularity, the chief difference being in the form of decoration and not in structure or contour.

In addition to the Late Renaissance forms that continued their hold in the seventeenth century, the latter part of that century and the early years of the eighteenth saw sundry other types coming into favour as well.

One of these types in common use was precisely like a chest of drawers, the top drawer having a front hinged at the bottom. This let down and afforded a place to write; at the back of it were pigeonholes, smaller drawers or little cupboards. Secretaries of this sort had straight fronts; straight fronts with canted, rounded, or re-entrant quadrant corners; and likewise fronts that were shaped all the way across. The secretaries of this variety that were decorated with carving in strong relief generally had straight fronts or fronts with canted corners; those with fronts shaped in a succession of curves, broken curves or curves and angles were more apt to be decorated either with some form of panelling or else with figured veneers or *intarsia*. The feet were of bracket form or else turned.

A variation from the foregoing type was that illustrated in Plate 42b which has a slant top, hinged at the bottom, letting down to form a writing space exactly like the familiar eighteenth century British and American slant-top secretaries. The fronts of these secretaries were both straight and shaped.

An early eighteenth century development of this form had a fairly shallow body (Plate 42a) and cabriole legs. Writing furniture of this type sometimes ended with the desk, at other times it continued upward as a two-door bookcase, constructed as a separate body although inseparably belonging to the desk base.

The type of bureau bookcase, with cabriole legs and a roll-top lid for the desk part (Plate 39a), is one of the characteristic sorts developed during the first half of the eighteenth century and belongs in that transition stage when the Baroque manner was gradually melting into the Rococo.

To the same period of imaginative activity belongs the bureau bookcase shewn in Plate 39b. This type of writing furniture, with a much shaped front and drawers extending all the way to the floor underneath the desk part, was very numerous from the latter part of the seventeenth century down to the middle of the eighteenth, and was not uncommon even after that date. The doors of the upper or bookcase portion were either continuous wooden panels or else panelled with mirrors. The bureau bookcase of Plate 39b is an especially good

example of the mirror-panelled upper body; the wooden panelled doors of the upper body are shewn in Plate 40b, while the tall, narrow bureau bookcase of Plate 41b has another mirror panel.

The tops of this family of bureau bookcases usually consisted of some form of pediment of symmetrical arrangement, such as the interrupted pediments of the Venetian lacquered example (Plate 40a), the veneered and inlaid example (Plate 40b), or the other Venetian instance (Plate 41a) with polychrome *appliqué* decorations. The top of the bureau bookcase in Plate 39b marks a sharp departure from the architectural symmetry of the Baroque manner to the asymmetrical playfulness of the Rococo.

The single-bodied secretary type, without an upper body containing a bookcase, enjoyed general favour about the middle of the eighteenth century. This type, shewing unmistakable French Louis Quinze influence, is well represented by the two examples given in Plate 43a and b. In both instances the structural lines of the body are unhesitatingly curved, thus indicating a departure from the Baroque practice of straight *structural* lines, no matter how many curved surfaces might be introduced in lines that were not structural. The *bombé* or swelling fronts and sides belong to the fully developed Rococo phase of Italian furniture.

In the low secretaries of this family, whether there were drawers extending almost all the way to the ground so that the body was supported on short cabriole

legs, or whether a shallow body was supported on full length cabriole legs, the desk-top was slanted, hinged at the bottom, and let down to form a writing space, disclosing the pigeonholes and small drawers within. It was not at all unusual to give the top of the desk-part of these deep-bodied or shallow-bodied and cabriole-legged low secretaries a graceful shaping, in addition to the swelling curves of the front and sides. This further elaboration is shewn in Plate 43a; the painted secretary in 43b represents the type with top construction of simpler lines.

ARMADI OR WARDROBES

The *armadio* or tall cupboard was altogether too useful a piece of furniture to be allowed to fall out of fashion. Instead, it was carefully adapted to the changing tastes of each succeeding age. During the seventeenth century there was a tendency for cabinetwork to grow taller. During the Early and High Renaissance, and even during the Late Renaissance, the cabinetwork was rarely tall of stature, however stout of structure it might be or however much space it might occupy horizontally. In the seventeenth century, however, not a few of the pieces sprouted upward. Amongst these were the *armadi,* wardrobes or tall cabinets.

The structural lines of these pieces invariably were straight, even during the utmost popularity of the Rococo fashion. This does not mean to say, however,

A

B

A. Eighteenth Century Walnut Slant-top Secretary, Louis XV Influence, *Bombé* Front and Shaped Top
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

B. Eighteenth Century Painted Slant-top Secretary, Louis XV Type, *Bombé* Front
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

PLATE 44

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Tall Painted Corner Cupboard of Two Bodies, Bowed Front
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Late Seventeenth Century Walnut Cabinet of Two Bodies, Shaped Panel Decoration
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century North Italian Walnut Table with Baluster Legs, Square on Plan and Block Feet
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Seventeenth Century Bolognese Walnut Table, Baluster-turned Legs and Brass-studded Edge of Top
Courtesy of Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia and New York City

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Small Octagonal-topped Walnut Table, Baluster-turned Legs
B. Seventeenth Century Small Octagonal-topped Walnut Table, Baluster-turned Legs and Fretted Apron

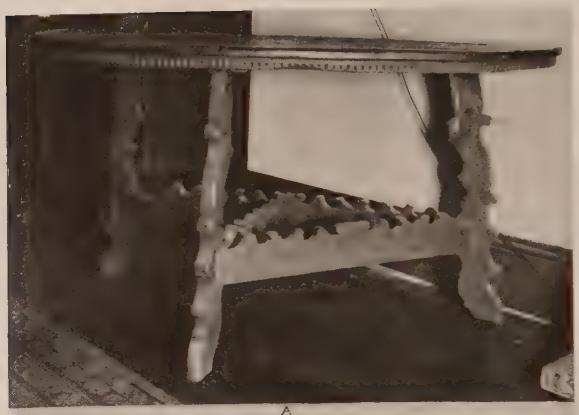
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A

B

A. Late Seventeenth Century Octagonal Tray-topped Painted Table
Shaped Stretcher and Octagonal Tapered Legs
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Late Seventeenth Century Painted Tray-topped Table, Shaped Stretcher
and Bulb-turned Legs
Courtesy of the Wanamaker Stores, New York City



A

B

A. One of Pair of Seventeenth Century Half-round Walnut Tables of Spanish Type with Lyre-scrolled Fretted Legs and Fretted Stretchers. B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Table of Spanish Influence, Splayed Trestle Legs, Turned, and Wrought Iron Braces

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Seventeenth Century Carved and Gilt Console Table, Shaped Top; Shaped, Carved and Gilt Stretcher. B. Seventeenth Century Carved and Gilt Scroll-legged Console Table, Rectangular Marble Top

Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

PLATE 50

A B

A. Late Seventeenth Century Painted Commode, Shaped Front, Cabriole Legs, Hind's Feet
Courtesy of the Wanamaker Stores, New York City
B. Eighteenth Century Small Painted Hutch Commode, Cabriole Legs, Louis XV Influence
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

that they were severely rectangular in aspect. In not a few late seventeenth century examples re-entrant quadrant corners with a bold sweep gave the *armadio* an impressive architectural mien. Again, corners were often either canted or rounded, while many tall, narrow *armadi* or cupboards were made with a quarter-round front to stand in corners. Sometimes these tall corner cupboards, though severely rectilinear in their structural and horizontal lines, had fronts elaborately shaped on plan.

Closely akin to the tall corner cupboards with a quadrant or quarter-round front (Plate 44a) were the quarter-rounded-front corner cupboards or cabinets on legs. These legs were both cabriole and straight and the underframing or stand on which the cupboard directly rested often contained a shallow drawer, although this was not invariably a feature of the construction. The corner cupboards supported on legs were commonly not so tall as those whose straight sides extended all the way to the floor and stood on a moulded base.

The arrangement of doors differed in a purely arbitrary manner. A tall cabinet or *armadio,* whether intended for corner use (Plate 44a) or designed to stand against a straight wall (Plate 44b), might have the doors placed in two, or even three, stages. Again, there might be two full length doors. Some of the narrow corner cupboards had only one full length door.

In some cases the moulded base stood directly on

the floor; in other cases turned or carved feet supported the base. The design was always architecturally consistent with duly proportioned base and cornice.

These *armadi,* wardrobes or tall cabinets were often painted with elaborate polychrome decorations (Plate 44a). The custom of painted decorations on such pieces of furniture was especially prevalent in Venice, although painted *armadi* were made elsewhere also. With the unpainted walnut *armadi* the panelling was sometimes carried to an advanced degree of intricacy, with shapings characteristic of the period (Plate 44b).

TABLES

Many of the tables of the seventeenth century shewed no very radical difference from those of preceding periods, natural conservatism favouring the retention of what had proved both useful and beautiful; other tables, again, clearly indicated the arrival of strong Spanish influence and the entrance of other modes also, derived from sources outside of Italy.

One family or generic type of tables, thoroughly representative of the seventeenth century, is illustrated in Plates 45 and 46. These tables were both long and narrow, of the so-called "refectory" stamp, and also smaller and virtually square in shape. The tops were thick planks of walnut, which contributed to the aspect of sturdy substantiality, and the stout underframing had baluster-shaped legs connected by robustly proportioned stretchers.

The tables of this type were comparatively plain; the ornamentation consisted mainly of well-considered mouldings along the underframing and the shaping of the legs. The underframing, which might or might not contain drawers, frequently exhibited panels shaped in the typical seventeenth century manner—oblong with re-entrant quarter-round corners (Plate 45b) or else lozenge-shaped. In many cases there were fretted brackets in the angles (Plate 46b) where the legs joined the underframing and the stretchers. Some of the Bolognese tables of this family had brass studdings along the edges, a form of adornment distinctive of Bolognese work (Plate 45b).

The baluster-shaped legs were usually turned and round on plan (Plate 45b), but there were also baluster-shaped rectangular legs, moulded and square on plan (Plate 45a). The smaller, square tables of this general type occasionally had some modest embellishment in the form of mouldings around the top (Plate 46b) but more usually the tops were altogether plain (Plate 46a). The smaller tables, as well as the longer ones, were made both with and without drawers in the underframing. The tops of some of the smaller tables of this family were octagonal, set on square framing (Plate 46).

Closely related to the family of tables shewn in Plates 45 and 46 were oblong tables whose legs were straight turned cylinders, or rather columns, and the only attempt at embellishment consisting of a few

inconspicuous mouldings and the reeding around the edge of the top. Also, akin to the baluster-turned leg family, shewn in Plates 45 and 46, are the tables with trestle end supports consisting of turned balusters on a moulded base with turned balusters likewise rising from the central H brace and supporting the central length of the table.

The Spanish influence in seventeenth century Italian tables appears in the types shewn in Plate 48. The oblong table (Plate 48b) with pairs of splayed turned legs at the ends, braced by a wooden stretcher, displays its Spanish derivation by the rising wrought iron brace fastened to the middle of the top, on its under side, and attached to the stretchers of the pairs of legs. Another Spanish type, popular in the middle and late seventeenth century, is the half-round table (one of a pair that could be joined together) with wooden legs (Plate 48a) cut out or fretted in the shape of lyre scrolls.

Late in the seventeenth century a number of small tables of various sorts came into fashion, many of them designed for specialised uses. Tray-topped tables, with low, flaring rims (Plate 47) were popular for tea, coffee and chocolate services or for afternoon refreshments of wine, cakes and fruit.

Trumpet-shaped turned legs (Plate 47b) and tapered octagon legs (Plate 47a) with shaped stretchers came into use about the same time as the legs and stretchers of similar fashion in England. Many of

these small tables, both tray-topped and without the tray edge, were lacquered or painted with polychrome decorations. They were also made of walnut, sometimes with beautifully figured veneer, and inlaid.

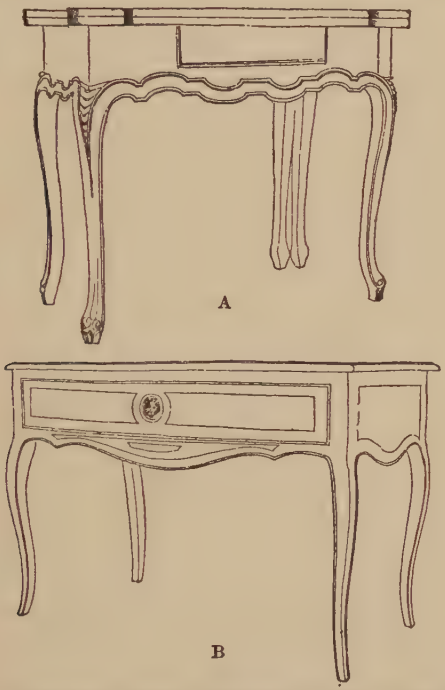


Fig. 17.—A. Eighteenth Century Flap-topped Walnut Card Table of Louis XV Influence. B. Eighteenth Century Oblong Table with Shaped Apron; Louis XV Type

Elaborate carving for such pieces of furniture had gone out of fashion.

The early and middle eighteenth century brought much the same sorts of tables as were to be found in France at the same period. The contours were virtually identical with those of contemporary French

tables and the chief modes of decoration were *intarsia* on a walnut base, painting or lacquering, and gilding. Many of the walnut tables were quite plain, without painting, inlay or gilding, and depended for their grace upon their agreeable contours and a few simple mouldings. Such were the plain walnut tables, of the flap-topped type for cards (Fig. 17a), with contours of unmistakable Louis Quinze derivation. There were also oblong tables with cabriole legs and shaped aprons pointing plainly to French Louis XV inspiration (Fig. 17b).

Tables of this period that were enriched with elaborate carving were almost invariably gilded. The two late seventeenth century console tables (Plates 49a and b) ornately carved are further embellished with a complete coat of gilding; the early eighteenth century short consoles and the long consoles or side tables of the same date are likewise wholly gilt over the carving. Comparison of examples will shew that the foliated carving of the late seventeenth century was of heavier scale and thicker, rounder proportions, while the carving of the eighteenth century was lighter in scale and more spiky and spidery in character.

COMMODES AND CHESTS OF DRAWERS

The eighteenth century was pre-eminently the age of the commode, a low piece of furniture on legs with several drawers or with a pair of doors. It was more usual, however, for the commode to have drawers.

A. Eighteenth Century Painted *Encoignure*, Louis XV Influence, Shaped Front, Cabriole Legs and Bracket Top. B. Eighteenth Century Painted Commode, Louis XV Influence, *Bombé* Front and Shaped Apron
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

A. Eighteenth Century Walnut Veneered Commode, Louis XV Influence, Shaped Front, Veneered Bandings, Cabriole Legs and Shaped Apron
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Commode, Louis XV Influence, Slightly Shaped Front, Cabriole Legs, Claw and Ball Feet
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A

B

A. Eighteenth Century Walnut Commode, Louis XV Influence, *Bombé* Front, Shaped Sides and Rococo Panels. B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Commode, Louis XV Influence Straight Shaped Front, Cabriole Legs and Shaped Apron
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Chest of Drawers, Carved Ends and Pulls, Rectangular Body and Bracket Feet. B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Chest of Drawers, Louis XV Influence, Rococo Panels and Moulded Feet

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

PLATE 55

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Carved and Gilt Cabinet, Two Full-length Doors, Turned Feet, Marble Top
Courtesy of John D. McIlhenny, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Cabinet or *Credenza*, Shaped Panels, Bracket Feet, Two Doors and Drawers Above
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Armchair, Spiral-turned Front Legs, Arms and Pair of Front Stretchers, no Finials on Backposts
B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Chair, Spiral-turned Legs and Stretchers, and Velvet-covered Backposts
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Chair with Baluster-turned Legs and Stretchers, Figured Leather Upholstery, Brass Studdings, and Back with Shaped Top
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Armchair, Spool-turned Front Legs, Arms and Stretchers; Carved Acanthus

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Armchair with Wooden Seat, Square Legs, Turned Armposts, Turned Spindle Back Shaped Toprail and Acanthus Backpost Finials. B. Seventeenth Century Tapestry-covered Walnut Armchair Rectangular Back Without Finials, Spiral-turned Legs and Stretchers, and Carved Arms

Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

Chests of drawers, with the drawers extending all the way to the floor, although known at an earlier date, were peculiarly characteristic of the eighteenth century. The commode, far more than the chest of drawers, was a favourite *salon* and boudoir piece of furniture and was much more apt to be the vehicle of elaborate enrichment.

The painted commode (Plate 50a) of Venetian origin, with hind's feet and cabriole legs, exemplifies a late seventeenth century type akin to French pieces of the late Louis Quatorze fashion, although the contour of the body as well as the manner of decoration are altogether Italian.

The little painted hutch commode (Plate 50b) with a pair of doors, a shallow open shelf above them, and a low waved or shaped gallery around the top, is more thoroughly French in its contour which dates it in the first half of the eighteenth century. The painted decoration is purely Italian in character.

The painted Louis XV commode (Plate 51b) with *bombé* or swelling front represents a type in general favour throughout the early and middle eighteenth century. It is closely analogous in manner with its French prototypes but its contours have not the same subtlety. Nevertheless, what it lacks in this respect it makes up for in its general *naïveté* and the merriment of its decorations which are distinctively Italian.

The little painted *encoignure* (Plate 51a) is merely a small corner commode with doors and a quarter-

rounded front. Similar pieces of furniture for corner use, and generally made in pairs or in sets of four, were peculiarly favoured in both Italy and Spain during the eighteenth century.

Shaped-fronted (Plates 52a and b and 53b) and *bombé*-fronted (Plate 53a) commodes were also made of plain walnut, walnut veneered or walnut enriched with a little carving so that their decoration varied all the way from the gorgeousness of paint and lacquer to the sombre brown of the natural wood. Throughout the eighteenth century, however, the commodes one and all indicated by one or more characteristics of contour the French origins from which they sprang.

Chests of drawers, both those of the late seventeenth century (Plate 54a) and those of the eighteenth (Plate 54b) were often the objects of intricate carving (Plate 54a) or of elaborate panelling outlined by mouldings (Plate 54b). Seventeenth century chests of drawers often exhibited canted corners or quarter-round reentrant corners like some of the larger pieces of contemporary cabinetwork.

Chests of drawers were also lacquered, painted, veneered, and inlaid with wood or bone as well as executed in the plain walnut, and the fronts of these more ornate examples were occasionally shaped with a succession of curves and angles.

The seventeenth century two-door cabinets (Plate 55a and b), standing about three and a half to four feet high, were related both to the commode and to

the earlier *credenzino*. Like the commode, they were generally more decorative than utilitarian in purpose and were, therefore, dignified with appropriate enrichment. The cabinet in Plate 55a is completely gilded; the cabinet in Plate 55b is of walnut with carved ornamentation.

CHAIRS AND STOOLS

Italian chairs of the seventeenth century were more dependent upon well-considered turning for their distinction than upon any other agency of decoration. As the century advanced gilding and painting also played their part in the decoration of chairs, but carving, for the most part, occurred in an altogether subsidiary rôle. There was more variety in the upholstery, too, than in preceding periods. Besides the rich velvets and brocades previously used for covering chairs, needlework of different sorts, damasks, silks, satins, tapestry and figured leathers were in frequent use for both armchairs and side chairs.

The backs of upholstered chairs were often lower (Plates 56a and b and 57a and b) than in the sixteenth century and the tops of upholstered backs were frequently straight and devoid of finials (Plates 56a and b) or else slightly arched (Plate 57a). Even when the backs retained their old height, they were apt to be straight-topped and raked (Plate 58b) so as to give the sitter more ease.

Legs, stretchers and arm-posts in many cases were

spiral turned (Plates 56a and b and 58b) and, in spiral-turned armchairs, the parts of the arm not covered by upholstery were apt to be spiral-turned likewise (Plate 56a). The end of the arm terminated in a round ball or knob (Plate 57b) or the arm might end with acanthus carving (Plate 58b) and the junction of arm and backpost might also have acanthus carving.

The legs were unusually well braced by an abundance of stretchers (Plate 56a and b) these cross-braces sometimes occurring in pairs.

Spool-turning, instead of spiral turning, was also of common occurrence (Plate 57b) and likewise sundry variations of baluster turning for legs (Plates 57a and 59a and b) and for spindled backs (Plates 58a and 59a and b) were in ordinary use.

Side chairs with open backs containing rows of small turned spindles, very similar in appearance to the seventeenth century English "Yorkshire" and "Lancashire" chairs, formed one of the usual types to be met with (Plates 58a and 59a and b). Sometimes there was only one row of spindles (Plates 58a and 59a), again there were two (Plate 59b). These chairs commonly had a cresting on the toprail. There were also armchairs of similar type with arcaded spindle backs. Akin to the walnut chairs of this type were the rush-seated peasant chairs, crudely made of beech, such as those shewn in Fig. 18, a, b and c.

The very end of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth saw radical departures from

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Chair, Baluster-turned Front Legs and Stretchers, Arcaded Turned-spindle Back, and Shaped Cresting
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Chairs, Baluster-turned Front Legs and Stretchers, Double Arcaded Backs with Turned Spindles, Shaped Cresting
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

A. Late Seventeenth Century Armchair, Louis XIV Influence, Scrolled and Carved Legs Scrolled, Carved, Shaped and Rising Stretcher; Scrolled Armposts, Shaped Arms, and Shaped Top to Flared Back

Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

B. Late Seventeenth Century Painted Venetian Armchair, Cabriole Legs, Hind's Feet, Shaped Back and Shaped Arms

Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

C. Eighteenth Century Walnut Cane-seated Armchair, Cabriole Legs and Open Back with Interlaced Splat

D. Eighteenth Century Walnut Armchair, Cabriole Legs and Open Back with Vase-shaped Splat

Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Armchair, Baluster-turned Front Legs, Stretchers and Armposts, Shaped Carved Arms and Shaped Back
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

B. Eighteenth Century Venetian Painted Armchair, Cabriole Legs and Open Back with Pierced Vase Splat
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

A. Eighteenth Century Venetian Painted Cane-seated Chair, Cabriole Legs, Shaped Recessed Stretcher, Shaped Seat, and Spooned Back with Vase Splat

B. Eighteenth Century Gilt Armchair, Louis XV Type
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

C. Eighteenth Century Walnut Armchair Frame, Louis XV Influence
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Eighteenth Century Walnut Armchair Frame, Cabriole Legs, Shaped Recessed Stretcher Scrolled Armposts and Shaped Flared Arms, and Open Back with Pierced Vase Splat
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Chair, Cabriole Legs, Open Fiddle Back and Interlaced Splat
Courtesy of George Howe, Esquire, Philadelphia

C. Eighteenth Century Walnut Roundabout Chair with Straight Turned Legs
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Late Seventeenth or Early Eighteenth Century Venetian Painted Daybed, Octagonal Trumpet-shaped Legs, Shaped and Scrolled Stretchers, and Flared, Shaped Ends
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Late Eighteenth Century Painted Settee, Sheraton Type, Ionic Columnar Fluted Legs, White, Pale Green and Gold
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

A. Early Eighteenth Century Walnut Caned Chairback Settee, Cabriole Legs, Shaped Stretchers, Square Baluster Armposts, Shaped Toprail and Straight Splats. B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Sofa, Louis XV Influence, Cabriole Legs, Greatly Flared Arms and Shaped Top. C. Eighteenth Century Rush-Seated Ladder-back Settee, Louis XV Provincial Influence

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A

B

A. Eighteenth Century Walnut Settee, Cabriole Legs, Shaped Seatrail, Shaped Open Back with Pierced Splats and Shaped Toprail
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

B. Eighteenth Century Caned Settee, Louis XV Influence, Cabriole Legs, Shaped Seatrail, Shaped Back
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

the styles of chairs already mentioned and likewise a marked tendency toward a diversity of forms. In Plate 60a appears an armchair frame closely corresponding to French armchair frames of the reign of Louis XIV, while in Plate 60b is a painted Venetian armchair with cabriole legs and hind's feet evidently

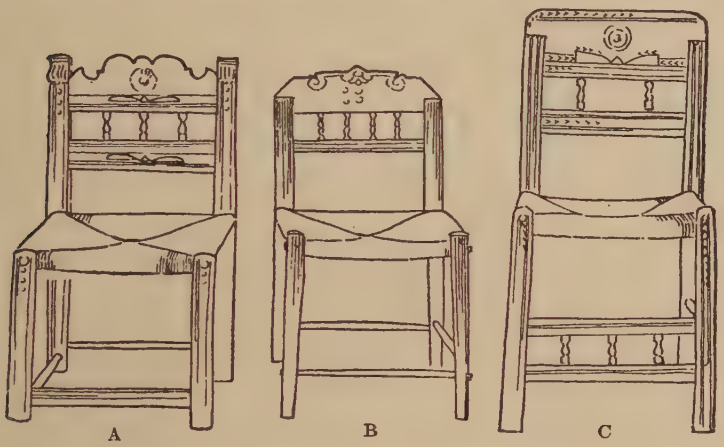


Fig. 18.—Seventeenth Century Rush-seated Peasant Chairs Made of Beech

inspired by a late Louis Quatorze prototype. The form of the back and the shaping of the arms are plainly adaptations from the backs and arms of late Louis XIV or *Régence* armchairs.

Again, the two early eighteenth century walnut armchairs (Plate 60c and d) with open backs gracefully combine features of French derivation with other features resembling English chair design of the Queen Anne period. Neither French nor English, they yet display pleasing qualities of both blended in a manner indicative of versatile Italian genius for adaptation.

At the same time they possess a striking degree of individuality.

The tapestry-covered armchair in Plate 61a retains strong elements of earlier Italian precedent, but the painted Venetian armchair in Plate 61b again displays plain kinship with both English and French forms, but combined and adapted in a characteristic Italian fashion with a genial playfulness possessed by neither the English nor French cousins.

The painted Venetian side chair (Plate 62a) is clearly an Italian version of an English Queen Anne fiddle-back chair; the Italian chairmaker had to make up for the lack of fine wood and delicate carving by blithesome painted decoration and he shewed his native bent for variation in the treatment of the open back. The two early eighteenth century armchairs (Plates 62b and c) are almost exact copies of French Louis XV models. So also is the armchair (Plate 63a) with, however, a certain flavour of Queen Anne influence. The side chair with open interlaced back (Plate 63b) and cabriole legs exhibits the germ of English design thoroughly assimilated by Italian interpretation, and the walnut roundabout chair (Plate 63c) likewise contains the germ of English inspiration worked out according to Italian notions.

A tapestry-covered armchair (like 62b) from the Metropolitan Museum is purely French in manner; the walnut and gilt side chair (Plate 79c), however, is so completely English in its rendering that it could

readily be mistaken for an elegant product of the time of Queen Anne.

SOFAS, SETTEES AND DAY-BEDS

The cumbersome *cassapanca* lost its popularity during the course of the seventeenth century. Its place was taken first by the types of benches described in a preceding section. Later on, the fully upholstered and the open-back settee completely superseded it. About the same time, too, the day-bed added another variant.

Sofas with turned legs, stretchers and roll arms were characteristic of sofa fashion towards the end of the seventeenth century and in the opening years of the eighteenth. The painted day-bed (Plate 64a) in the fashion of its legs, its stretchers and the cresting of its ends is thoroughly representative of sofa design in Italy at the same time that similar *motifs* were popular in England, that is to say the period of William and Mary and the opening years of the eighteenth century.

In Plate 65a is shewn a walnut settee with caned seat and back of the early eighteenth century. Its *relationship* with English Queen Anne seating furniture is perfectly obvious, but no one could ever mistake it for an English piece. The great length of this settee is one feature that marks it as Italian. It was customary in the great halls and spacious *saloni* of Italian country houses to have very long settees, some of them as much as from fifteen to eighteen feet in length. Again, the square baluster armposts and the propor-

tions and shaping of the arms are distinctly Italian and reminiscent of seventeenth century methods; the shaping of the toprail, and the lines of the posts and splats of the back, likewise are distinctively Italian.

The sofa (Plate 65b) of the first half of the eighteenth century shews clearly enough its kinship with the French Louis XV *canapé,* but its Italian origin is plainly evident from its length, the design and shape of the arm fronts and the excessive outward flare or rake of the arms, and also the sweeping contour of the shaped toprail. The emphatic outward flare of the arms of sofas of this sort was a rather favourite Italian device in the eighteenth century; this allowed extra room for movable cushions and also made it easier to recline.

The early eighteenth century walnut chair-back settee in Plate 66a displays a curious blending of Queen Anne and Louis Quinze *motifs.* The combination is exceedingly happy in its result and as full of grace as though all the elements had been derived from a single, self-contained source. The caned Louis Quinze settee, in Plate 66b, is, of course, of wholly French inspiration, but the caning is an Italian innovation and the rest of the interpretation speaks French with a strong Italian accent.

BEDSTEADS

During the seventeenth century there were in general use both the high-posted bedsteads, with curtains and testers or canopies, bedsteads with half-length

A. Late Seventeenth Century Walnut Bedstead, Carved Headboard, Spiral-turned Posts, Channelled and Gadrooned Rails. B. Early Eighteenth Century Painted Bedstead, Cabriole Legs, Short Fore Posts and Shaped Headboard

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Eighteenth Century Venetian Bedstead, without Posts or Footboard, Shaped Headboard with Carved and Gilt Frame, the Field Filled in with Damask
Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

B. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Bedstead, with Footboard lower than Headboard, Gilt Rosettes and Fluting
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

posts, and bedsteads with no posts at all. The last, in the late seventeenth century, sometimes had elaborately shaped and decorative headboards, either attached to the frame or made separately and fastened against the wall at the head of the bedstead. Some of these separate shaped headboards hung on the wall were completely covered with damask, brocatelle or some other rich fabric. Not infrequently these postless bedsteads had separately constructed canopies, with curtains, hung above them.

The walnut bedstead with spiral-turned half-length posts (Plate 67a) represents a *type* of bedstead used when four-posters were not employed. The side rails of these bedsteads very often came in for a share of carved decoration, but the headboard was the chief and favourite spot for lavishing ornamentation.

The painted Venetian bedstead (Plate 67b) plainly shews the intricate shaping of headboards so popular in the latter end of the seventeenth century and in the fore part of the eighteenth. Although the bedstead here shewn has half-length posts at the foot, the posts were very often left off altogether. As noted before, the shaped headboards might either be a part of the bedstead or a separate contrivance fastened against the wall.

The bedstead shewn in Plate 68a is of Venetian origin and belongs to the early eighteenth century. The shaping of the headboard is clearly derived from seventeenth century Baroque precedent, but the modi-

fication of the curves and the general contour as well as all the detail of ornamental *motifs* are thoroughly Rococo and close akin to the French manner of Louis XV furniture. The carved wood framing is wholly gilt; the enclosed area is covered with rich green damask.

There were also many Italian bedsteads of the first half and middle part of the eighteenth century that had cabriole legs, of French Louis Quinze fashion, and footboards and headboards of about equal height. These head and footboards were unpierced, shaped with an outward curve near the bottom and, at the top finished with an outward roll. Bedsteads of this description were generally painted with more or less ornate polychrome decorations.

THE NEO-CLASSIC AGE

BACKGROUNDS OF THE NEO-CLASSIC AGE

THE latter part of the eighteenth century and the opening years of the nineteenth—in other words, the years of the Neo-Classic hey-day—were not distinguished by any significant architectural expression. It was not a time of extensive building such as might be witnessed in England, or even in France. The *palazzi* and *villas* built in earlier periods remained as they were without any very drastic changes, when changes were made at all. More usually there were no architectural changes whatever. A few country houses were newly built, it is true, but ordinarily the most that was done was to redecorate the old interiors, rid them of their more assertive Rococo embellishments, and bring them more into conformity with the Classicism of the new taste. To do this was a comparatively simple matter and involved no structural changes of any moment or difficulty; it was, indeed, largely a process of elimination, straightening out curved lines, and replacing one set of decorative properties by another—not as serious a job as might be imagined, for so many of the decorations were wrought in paint on a flat surface.

But even after all interior changes in decoration had been made by those who felt constrained to keep

pace with current fashion, the number of consistently Neo-Classic interiors in Italy was negligible in comparison with the number of interiors remaining unaltered from earlier periods. Not so, however, in the case of the furniture. The amount of Neo-Classic furniture produced and used in Italy is truly astonishing. It required no very great effort to make an Italian interior of some earlier mode at least hospitable towards and harmonious with furniture of the Neo-Classic manner. The differences were not difficult to compose, and the Italians of the day shewed their enthusiasm for archæology largely by the furniture they had made in the new manner.

The initial impetus for the Neo-Classic style undoubtedly came from Rome and Naples, yet such was the general state of the social temper—thanks, in great measure, to political conditions—that the Italians were disposed to make little of the style until it had first been filtered through a French medium. Winckelmann's archæological investigations at Rome and the fruits of excavation at Herculaneum and Pompei supplied the bone and sinew, but society from Venice to Naples, with its all-dominant French leanings, must first see the body in French flesh before they would welcome it.

In the interiors rehabilitated to accord with the Italian style newly come home speaking French, straight lines and the ordered curves of oval, ellipse and circle supplanted the whimsical curves of the Rococo manner.

Cartouches no longer imposed themselves on cornices, pediments were now for the most part uninterrupted, pilasters, friezes and cornices of Classic purity and more delicate scale now became dominant in the repertoire of decoration, while arabesques both in the ancient manner and also in the more genial fashion of Raphael and Giuliano Romano lent their grace. Oval or circular halls and anterooms, floored with marble tiles or mosaic, their walls relieved by niches and by columns or pilasters, gave varied interest. According to the dictates of the new mode, many walls were plain, their surfaces painted light, cool greens and blues or in lavender, yellow or rose, with a moderate use of gilding; other walls were panelled, similar colour schemes prevailing, and the panels when not of a plain colour often enclosed pastoral or architectural paintings, arabesques, or subjects drawn from the rich storehouse of ancient design; and wall-paper, too, played its part in the scheme of mural adornment, either in dainty flowered and repeat patterns or in the more ambitious landscape devices.

Fireplaces were low and of Classic design, while above them mirrors extended most or all of the way to the ceiling. Mirrors, either empanelled or framed and hung against the wall, also added their lustre and distinction to rooms of the period, and the brilliance of the composition was increased in many cases by crystal chandeliers.

In Italian decoration doors had always been the

subject of rich ornamentation, and their embellishment continued in unabated popularity, only the manner and *motifs* were changed to correspond with the prevailing fashion. Overdoor paintings, too, frequently yielded a further point of interest.

In both the fixed decoration of interiors and in the ornamentation of furniture we find the Italian work of the Neo-Classic period "characterised by an absence of many of the pretty French conceits such as ribbon bow-knots, dainty flowers and sentimental *motifs,* comprising arrows, doves, etc., as well as those *motifs* Rousseau inspired through his regard for nature. Instead, the Pompeian, Etruscan and Roman fuses with the Raphaelesque arabesque of the Renaissance and the antique fantasies of Piranesi, in a manner that in design conception recalls the traditions of the *quattrocento* and is not unjustly claimed by some enthusiasts for the style to be the most beautiful of Italian work since that epoch" (v. *History of Italian Furniture,* Odom).

The fabrics used for upholstery and hangings were ordinarily somewhat lighter and more delicate in design and colouring than those of preceding eras, although the Italian love of colour could never be subdued into dull greyness or the anæmic insipidity of pseudo-refinement. Notwithstanding the lighter and merrier vein of Neo-Classic colouring, the older vogue for rich, full-bodied colourings was never wholly superseded. In any event, there was always gorgeousness enough, both in pattern and colour, to satisfy the more ardent

fabric enthusiasts. Chintzes and printed linens, too, were used to a much greater extent than is commonly supposed. They were popular, of course, for villas used only in summer, but they were by no means unknown in interiors of palaces and winter houses where the furnishings were of sumptuous character.

FURNITURE

CABINETS, CUPBOARDS AND ARMADI

The *armadio* or wardrobe with two doors continued in use right down to the end of our period in the early nineteenth century. Though many of them were made of plain walnut and were devoid of any particular effort at ornamentation, they were frequently the subjects of considerable enrichment, chiefly painted and gilt or else inlaid with the delicate *intarsia* in patterns characteristic of the era. The one door corner cupboards or wardrobes likewise continued in use, but the fronts were not shaped as they often were in the earlier part of the century. Wardrobes of both kinds stood either on moulded bases or on feet and were finished at the top with a cornice.

There were also various sorts of cabinets and cupboards, some low, some tall, that exhibited sundry features of individuality and were more or less decorative in their intent and effect, but all of them would come under the classification of *armadio* or cupboard. Amongst these were low three-cornered cabinets with doors, intended to stand in the corners of rooms.

Some of the low cabinets, though of one body, had upper and lower divisions of doors and, in some cases (Plate 69b) there were four-door divisions, the doors being separated one from another by stiles and rails. The doors in Plate 69b are of tambour work and, instead of opening outward on hinges, they roll back into the sides of the cabinet when opened.

The piece of furniture in Plate 69a is really a tall falling-front writing cabinet, but hanging cupboards with two full length doors or two-division cabinets with four doors were made in exactly the same manner.

The acutely tapered short square legs of both pieces are strongly typical of Italian furniture of the Neo-Classic era.

COMMODES

The commodes of this epoch were made sometimes with doors only (Plate 72b), with drawers only, as in Plate 70a, or with a combination of doors and drawers, as in Plate 72a. The depth of the body and the length of the legs varied considerably; the legs were either square and, as a rule, acutely tapered (Plate 71a) or else round and tapered (Plate 72a). The round tapered legs were either turned (Plate 72a) or else fluted (Plate 70a) or reeded. There were also slender outward splayed legs like those of the commode in Plate 70b. The tops of commodes were often of marble (Plate 70b) or else marbleised.

The bodies of the commodes were usually rectangular (Plates 70 and 72) and varied considerably in

Late Eighteenth Century Falling-front Writing Cabinet with Cupboard below, *Intarsia* Decoration and Cameo Panels
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City
B. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Cabinet, Four Doors of Tambour Work
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

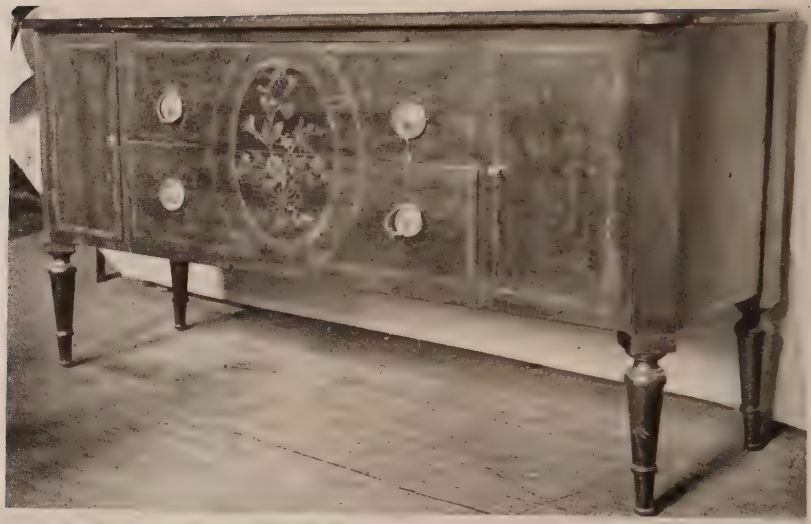
A

A. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Commode of Two Drawers, Straight Front
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

B. Late Eighteenth Century Three-drawer Commode, Veneered and Banded, Straight Front and Marble Top
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century Semicircular Commode with Doors, *Intarsia* Pictorial Decorations. B. Late Eighteenth Century Small Square Commode with Door and Drawer, *Intarsia* Pictorial Decorations

Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington



A. Late Eighteenth Century Long Commode with Doors and Drawers, Canted Corners, *Intarsia* Ornament

B. Late Eighteenth Century Mahogany Commode with Doors, Gilded Mouldings and Figured Veneer Panels

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A

B

A. Late Eighteenth Century Falling-front Walnut Secretary, *Intarsia* Decorations
Courtesy of George Howe, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Writing Table with Drawer and Side Cupboards
Intarsia Decorations
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century Side Table with Triangular Flap Top, *Intarsia* Decorations
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Late Eighteenth Century Long Walnut Side Table with Stretchers
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

PLATE 75

A. Early Nineteenth Century Walnut Circular Table, Reeded and Ribboned Pedestal on Three-footed Base
B. Early Nineteenth Century Circular Table with Three Terminal-headed, Paw-footed Cabriole Legs on Flat Base
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century Painted and Gilt Side Table, Fluted Tapered Legs and Lozenged Apron. B. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Side Table, Shallow Drawer and Tapered Straight Legs, Fluted

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

length; the height was fairly uniform. The *credenza* had gone out of fashion, but in the case of the longer commodes it was quite possible to make them answer substantially the same purpose. Pairs of the shorter commodes, too, could easily supply the place of the older and longer *credenza*.

Although of less common occurrence, there were commodes of shapes other than rectangular, such, for example, as the semi-circular (Plate 71a) *intarsia* commode. Then, too, there were slight variations from strict rectangularity such as canted corners (Plate 72a) and rounded corners.

The Neo-Classic period in Italian furniture was, as in other countries, a time of great elegance and wide variety in the use of choice materials. The commodes were generally made of walnut—always the staple wood of Italian furniture—of mahogany, or of some wood suitable for the polychrome painting and gilding with which they were often completely decorated. Rosewood was used to some extent, but usually in connexion with *intarsia*. All sorts of rare woods were employed for the *intarsia* decorations which might be comparatively simple and of slight extent (Plate 72a) or very rich and intricate, covering virtually the whole surface of the commode (Plate 71a and b).

In a number of cases the *intarsia* was restricted to little more than banding (Plate 70b) and was often used in connexion with veneer of finely grained woods of contrasting colours (Plate 70b) in the function of

a foil to give them stronger emphasis. Veneered panels or rich coloured and strongly figured woods, such as the mahogany door panels in Plate 72b, were frequently the only decoration aside from a few carved and gilded mouldings.

Carving did not ordinarily play a conspicuous part in the decoration of Neo-Classic commodes; when it was used at all it was of simple character such as that on the commode shewn in Plate 70a. Carved mouldings (Plate 72b) were not seldom enriched with gilding.

The commode very often figured in a console- or pier-composition with a mirror placed above it; in fact, this was a very favourite manner of using the commode. When a pier-composition was used between windows or between panels, and a commode was not placed beneath the mirror, its place was generally taken by a console table.

CHESTS OF DRAWERS

Chests of drawers, in their Neo-Classic form, were so closely akin to the commodes of the period that, in many cases, they were scarcely to be distinguished the one from the other. They were straight-fronted with rectangular bodies and were usually three drawers deep, having short, square tapered legs. As many of the commodes had deep bodies and short legs, it is easy to see how close the resemblance could be. The decoration of chests of drawers was of exactly the same kind as appeared on commodes. Some of the chests of

drawers were four drawers deep, but even then their tapered short legs, rather than feet, and the height at which their bodies stood from the floor, made them very like commodes. As a rule, the decoration of the chests of drawers was less elaborate than the decoration of commodes.

WRITING FURNITURE

The writing furniture of the Neo-Classic age, in its general character closely corresponded with contemporary French writing furniture. The writing *table* was, perhaps, the most popular although other types were by no means uncommon.

The tall cabinet falling-front secretary, as we have already seen (Plate 69a), continued to be made and used in this era and was the subject of very exquisite inlaid decoration with Classic cameo panels. Painted decorations and choicely figured veneers were also used for the embellishment of writing furniture of this sort.

The slant-top secretary, with a deep body containing drawers and extending all the way to the floor, was likewise in common use. There were likewise secretaries (Plate 73a) which, when the front of the deep top drawer was closed, looked like a fairly high chest of drawers. The deep top drawer was hinged at the bottom; when the drawer was pulled out and this front let down, it became an adequate secretary with the usual complement of small drawers and pigeonholes

inside at the back. Both these closely related types were patterned after contemporary English models. The latter variety was virtually the same thing as the lower part of the bureau bookcases so much in use in England at this period. The usual decoration was *intarsia* or figured veneer, although painted decorations were largely used also.

The oblong kneehole writing table, with cupboards or drawers at each side of the kneehole, long enough for plenty of room at each side of the sitter and wide enough for a convenient outlay of books and papers, was in general favour throughout this period. Such writing tables (Plate 73b) were, of course, patterned after the French writing tables that had appeared about the middle of the eighteenth century and continued to be made till after the turn of the century. Writing tables of this sort, in accordance with the custom of the era, had restrained mouldings of slight projection and the decoration was usually *intarsia* (Plate 73b), figured veneer or a little carving of modest character. The legs were either round, turned or reeded or fluted, or else square and tapered.

Some of the writing tables had little drawer provision at the sides of the kneehole but a good deal of emphasis on the sweeping apron across the front; this was apt to be more or less carved in low relief or else banded with *intarsia.* In some instances these kneehole writing tables had cupboards at each side while,

in others, there were two or three shallow drawers at each side of the sitter. The depth of the body varied; it was not usual for the drawer or cupboard bodies at the sides of the kneehole to extend all the way to the floor as they often did in English types.

TABLES

The late eighteenth century, no less in Italy than elsewhere in Europe, was a period of the greatest variety and delicacy in the form of tables. Besides the usual larger types of tables for dining-room and library, there were endless sorts of pier-tables, tea tables, card tables and little tables for all kinds of highly specialised purposes. Many of the tables, both large and small, had drawers variously contrived. All of them displayed a close family resemblance in their rectangular lines, slender proportions and tapered legs, either square on plan or round. In the latter case they were generally either fluted or reeded, sometimes with the addition of carving near the top or at the ancle, or else they were turned for the plainer sorts.

Some of the smaller tables had flap tops (Plate 74a) which could be opened and stood up against the wall. The legs were so arranged that one or more could be pulled out to support the top when it was opened out flat. What little carving there was on the tables—and a great many of them were totally devoid of any carving at all—was chiefly on the legs and feet or, in the case of console tables, on the apron: Many of the small

tables were exquisitely decorated with *intarsia* work (Plate 74a).

Although stretchers between the legs of tables had almost entirely disappeared in England and France by the end of the eighteenth century, they were still retained in Italy (Plate 74b) for a great many tables of this date, especially for the long, narrow tables that were placed against the wall.

A number of the tables of this era, especially pier-tables and tables set against the walls in the more formally furnished *salons,* had handsome marble tops while the legs and apron, carved in low relief, were painted and gilt. The *motifs* used for this carved, painted and gilt decoration were of Classic derivation for which the researches at Pompei and Herculaneum had furnished such abundant precedents. The robust proportions of the upper legs and the rather acute angle at which they were tapered, whether square on plan or round, distinctively marked the Italian manner of table design.

Pedestal tables with four outward curving legs supporting the pedestal, in the manner we are apt to associate with tables of late Sheraton and Duncan Phyfe design, were used at the end of the eighteenth century, and in the early years of the nineteenth. The tops were quite plain, but the pedestals, the four short outward curved legs, and the feet often bore some low relief carving. The toes were often brass-tipped and sometimes the brass toes were in the form of furred

paws and claws. Small pedestal tables of late date, with round, hexagon or octagon tops, often had a straight reeded and ribbon-bound pedestal (Plate 75a), like a lictor's bundle of fasces, resting upon a low base with feet. Again, there were small round tripod tables (Plate 75b) with round tapered cabriole legs or square tapered legs slanted inwards towards the bottom, with carved paw feet, while the tops of the legs bore carved masques. Tables of this type, of course, were directly inspired by French Directoire and early Empire models.

Many of the tables of this period, either on the aprons or on the blocks at the corners of the framing, or in both places, bore the peculiarly characteristic decoration of elongated lozenges (Plate 76a) wrought with more or less elaboration. The long narrow tables especially, as well as the small square ladies' work tables were apt to have shallow drawers (Plate 76b) set in the underframing.

CHAIRS AND STOOLS

In no kind of furniture more than in the chairs of this period is clearly exemplified the strongly individualistic and very charming interpretation of design the basis of which was borrowed from outside sources, French or English. English and French styles in furniture were to be found in Italy on every hand; designs that were own brothers and cousins german to the designs of the Brothers Adam, Hepplewhite, Sheraton and those of the contemporary French de-

signers left no doubt as to their origin. But somehow there was never any mistaking an Italian Sheraton chair for anything but an Italian chair. An Italian Hepplewhite chair might incorporate every least detail to be found in the original pattern, and an Italian Directoire chair might be directly copied from the designs of the Jacob Brothers or later of Percier and Fontaine, but no one with an atom of perception and average eyesight could be deceived for a moment into believing they had been made by any but Italian hands. The Italian craftsman always contrived, unconsciously perhaps, to impart an unmistakable element of his own racial or national individuality to any piece of work to which he set his hand; the Italian touch could not be disguised in the interpretation of a foreign model. The Italian might, and did, consciously and deliberately borrow foreign inspiration, but he always succeeded in making the result something characteristically and essentially Italian.

It is hardly fair, perhaps, to speak of these styles as foreign in origin. The Neo-Classic inspiration had come directly from Italy and nowhere else. The Brothers Adam, Sheraton and Hepplewhite, and all the French designers down to Percier and Fontaine were directly indebted to Piranesi, the Italian researches of Winckelmann, the drawings of Albertolli and the Italian publication of the discoveries at Pompeii and Herculaneum. Many of the best English and French designs are direct copies of designs that had

A. Late Eighteenth Century Leather-seated Armchair, Acutely Tapered Straight Fluted Legs, Carved Armposts, and Open Oval Back with Pierced Vase Splat

B. Late Eighteenth Century Square-backed Walnut Armchair Accented with Gilding, Pierced Lyre Splat (after Jacob model)

C. Late Eighteenth Century Square-backed Walnut Side Chair with Columnar and Oval Pierced Splat

D. Early Nineteenth Century White and Gold Side Chair from Directoire Model
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century "Louis Seize" Painted Chair Frame, Oval Back. B. Late Eighteenth Century "Louis Seize" Painted Armchair. C. Late Eighteenth Century Carved Walnut, Square-backed Armchair Frame, Curved Armposts, Raised Toprail D. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Cane-seated Square-backed Side Chair, Interlacing Circles in Back

Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

C.

A. Late Eighteenth Century "Louis Seize" Walnut Armchair with Flared Back
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Late Eighteenth Century "Louis Seize" Walnut Armchair, Flared Back and Straight "Raised" Toprail
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

C. Early Eighteenth Century Fiddle-back Chair with Cabriole Legs, Walnut Parcel Gilt
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

D. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Chair with Flared Square Back and Fretted Cross Rail
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Shield-back Chair of Hepplewhite Type, with Pierced Splat. B. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Armchair of Louis Seize Affinity
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

C. Late Eighteenth Century Octagon-backed Walnut Chair, Interlaced Splat

D. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Armchair, Flared Square Back, Interlaced Splat and Fluted Frame
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Chair, Square Back Filled with Guilloche and Acanthus Fretting. B. Early Nineteenth Century Chair of French Directoire Derivation, Upholstered Seat and Back Panel
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

C and D. Late Eighteenth Century Painted and Rush-seated Peasant Chairs with Broad Toprails
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century Square-backed Walnut Chair, Pierced Vase-shaped Splat. B. Late Eighteenth Century Square-backed Walnut Chair Back Panel Filled with Adjacent Arcs

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

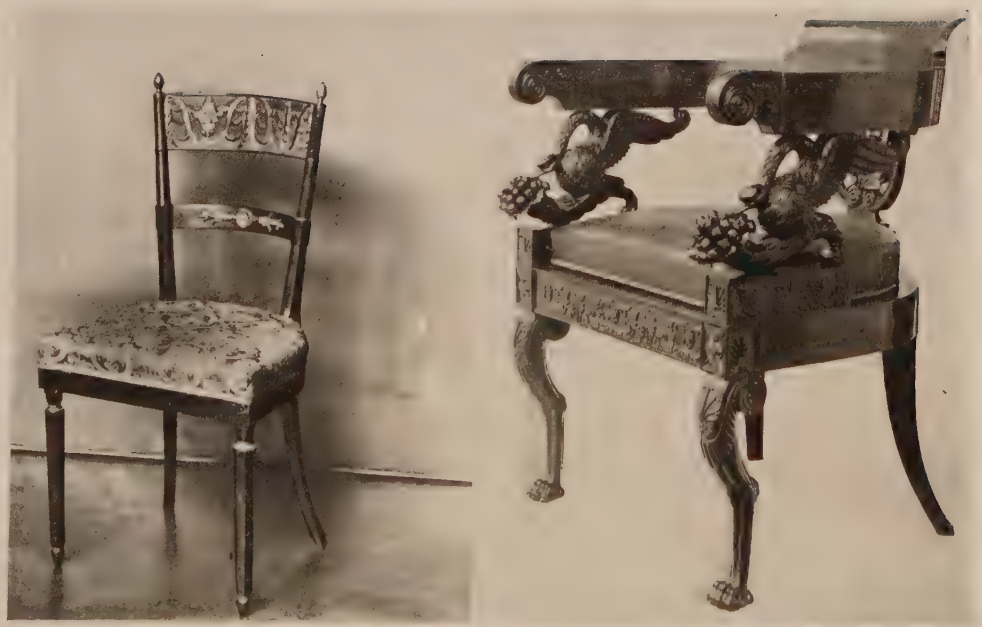
C. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Chair, Flared Square Back, Perspective of Cypresses and Arch in Back Panel. D. Late Eighteenth Century Painted Chair, Square Back, Carved Toprail and Pierced Splat

Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

A. Early Nineteenth Century Curule Chair, French Directoire Inspiration, Painted and Gilt. B. Early Nineteenth Century Walnut Chair, French Directoire Inspiration, Carved Three-feather Splat. C. Early Nineteenth Century Walnut Chairs, French Directoire Inspiration, and Early Nineteenth Century Three-legged Circular Walnut Table
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A

B



A. Early Nineteenth Century Mahogany Chair with Flared Back and Gilt Ornaments in Relief, Eight-sided Forelegs and Backposts
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington
B. Early Nineteenth Century Armchair, Swan and Cornucopia Arms and Animal Legs
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

issued from Italy and there is scarcely one of them that cannot be traced in one way or another to Italian inspiration. But Italy, at that time, had preferred to furnish the raw materials, have her styles manufactured and given concrete shape in England and France, and then get them back with an English or French hallmark, very often modifying them again and always giving them an individual tone in her own rendering. It was exactly the same as it is in the case of straw hats at the present day. There are no finer straw hats for men made anywhere in the world than just outside of Florence. Yet thousands and thousands of these hats are sent to England, have London hatters' names, bands and lining put in them, and are then sent back and sold all over Italy at tremendously advanced prices.

It is to the curious quality of nationalism gained in the process of translation from foreign to Italian expression that the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century chairs owe their peculiar and compelling charm. If we set out to render a verbal analysis of this difference between Italian chairs and many other chairs made in England and France at the same period, we shall not get very far. The difference is too elusive to be defined in words except in a rather general way. But there *is* a difference, a difference readily enough perceptible to the eye, which is quick to catch certain characteristic qualities of contour that even a long and formidable array of technical terms would be inadequate to convey accurately.

It is not that the lines of these Italian chairs are unusually subtle. They are not. Subtlety of line in the corresponding types of English and French chairs is carried to a far greater degree. As a matter of fact, the Italian "twist" of interpretation can hardly be called subtle at all. It is characterised rather by a cheerful *naïveté* and the warm geniality of aspect inherent in these chairs is one of their cardinal virtues. The English and French types are more studied and punctiliously "correct." The Italian chairs are impulsive and genial.

If the English or French model has a straight tapered leg, the angle of tapering is likely to be much more pronounced in the Italian version. The leg starts larger at the top and ends smaller at the bottom. The curves of backs or arms in English or French patterns became perceptibly more vigorous and lively in adaptations issuing from the hands of Italian craftsmen. The details of ornament, so meticulously ordered by British and Gallic designers, burst forth with rich spontaneity under the touch of Italian carvers, modellers and painters. The obsession for Classic restraint and purity of correct detail, that tempered all the work of English and French chairmakers, bothered the Italian not at all. With unhesitating frankness, he gave his handiwork a more emotional and exuberant expression. The play of imagination and consistent, sympathetic licence in which he indulged by no means lessened the elegance and refinement of his creations, but rather added inter-

est and broadened the grounds of temperamental appeal. Italian chairs of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are not in the least lacking in decorum, but there is nothing stilted about them. They are instinct with a blithesome but well-bred informality of aspect, and their essential playfulness and gayety make them not only engaging as occasional acquaintances but also thoroughly companionable to live with day in and day out.

The armchair in Plate 77a plainly proclaims its close affinity with designs by the Brothers Adam, but one glance at the legs, the contour of the arms, the acanthus-carved armposts, or the robust, pulpy structure and modified vase pattern of the splat in the oval back would be enough to put its immediate origin south of the Alps. The acute taper of the square fluted legs and the little turned feet are peculiarly Italian; so also are the contour of the arms, the depth of the leather seat and the comparative lowness of the oval back.

In the square-backed armchair (Plate 77b) the oval rosettes on the rounded front corners of the seat rail, the gadrooned and turned armposts rising from fluted plinths, and the exuberant lyre splat seem peculiarly Italian but curiously enough the design is directly copied from a French chair made and signed by Jacob; in Plate 77c the acutely tapered and fluted front legs, the recessed stretcher, the flare of the square back, the blocked base of the backposts, the beading surrounding the members of the back, and the pattern of the splat

declare Italian workmanship. The Directoire chair (Plate 77d) copied from a French model, is nevertheless Italian in the breadth and height of the back and the freedom of swing by which it is marked.

All four of the chairs in Plate 78 shew unmistakable affinity with contemporary English or French types; all, likewise, shew equally unmistakable Italian methods of rendering those types. In *a* the painted decoration and the contour of the oval back; in *b* the painting, the merry colour scheme and the painted acanthus cross splat; in *c* the contour of the square back and the manner of carving of the raised toprail and other parts of the walnut frame; in *d* the interlacing circle splat (particularly Italian), the caned seat and the manner of enhancing the lines with gilding on the walnut—all of these items indicate the Italian fashion of interpretation, irrespective of any other particular features that might be mentioned. In Plate 79, both *a* and *b* shew beyond all question their French Louis Seize derivation. The peculiar and pronounced outward flare of the backs of both, however, mark them as Italian; the character of the carved ornament and the proportions of the several members also indicate Italian origin. Comparison with French chairs of the same type will make the points of difference very plain. An Hepplewhite caned armchair betrays the same sort of differences from its English prototype and it is more robust and "pulpy" in the whole scale of its proportions.

The caned walnut side chair (Plate 79d), despite

its apparent relationship to the square-backed "Sheraton" type, proclaims itself indubitably Italian by its spade-footed square tapered legs *chamfered* on the corners, with a peculiar stop at the top giving a flaring appearance at the junction with the seatrail; by the bowed front of the seatrail and the moulded projection at its top; by the bold rounding of the seat frame with the curve starting well back towards the backposts, and the great width of the seat in proportion to the back; by the characteristic curve of the back legs, by the angle of their taper, and by their chamfering; by the manner in which the backposts rise from blocks at the level of the seat; by the pronounced outward flare of the back, a flare characteristically Italian; and by the cross splat with its scrolls and sunburst rosette, a *motif* without precedent in English or French furniture. An example could scarcely be found that better illustrates peculiarly Italian chair characteristics of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.

The cousin to Hepplewhite's shield-back chairs (Plate 80a), made of walnut, shews the marks of Italian interpretation in the sharply tapered square front legs ending in tiny turned feet; the moulded seatrail and its ornamentation; the breadth of the seat; the outward flare, the taper and the turned feet of the back legs; the acanthus-carved supports of the back; the width of the upper part of the shield just before the rise of the top-rail; and the design of the interlaced splat. The "Louis XVI" armchair (Plate 80b) has a more accentuated

flare to the back, more lively and less subtle curves to the backposts, and more vigorous curves to the cabriole front legs than the French model that inspired it. Then, too, though lacking none of the refined delicacy of the French model, the proportions of most of its members are more "pulpy" and its lines are mellower and less correctly perfect. As to the octagon-backed chair (Plate 80c), the shape of its back and the design of the interlaced splat are sufficient evidence of exuberant Italian fancy without the further confirmation of recessed stretcher, sharply tapered front legs, and the pinched necking at the top of the leg just beneath the seat frame. Whimsical playfulness of Italian fancy again appears in the armchair (Plate 80d) every member of which is reeded, the only interruptions to the continuous reedings being the square rosettes at the ends of the seatrail and at the angles of the flared square back. The design of the interlaced ribbon splat, terminating in three lotus blossoms or bunches of water leaves, though perfectly in harmony with the Sheratonesque back, is not at all English in character or in the quality of its rendering.

The Sheratonesque chair (Plate 81a) with round tapered legs and collared feet is thoroughly Italian in the slightly concaved surface of its seatrail and the frame of the back, as well as in the graceful gilded guilloche and celery pattern that fills in the entire space of the back. The early nineteenth century chair (Plate 81b) of French Directoire affinity, stoutly asserts its

Italian origin by the reeded shoulders of its round tapered front legs and by the curiously piquant flare of the curved backposts that uphold the high-waisted rectangular upholstered back. The two rush-bottomed and painted peasant chairs (Plates 81c and d) display sundry Italian characteristics in the contours of the front legs, the reeding and the beading of the backposts, the form of the broad pierced toprail of *d*, and the painted *motifs* of both.

Of the group of square-backed chairs in Plate 82, the proportions and contours of the turned and fluted legs of *a*, the manner of carved decoration on the seat-rail and its bottom bead, the blocked base of the backposts, the beaded edges of all members of the back, and the form of the modified vase splat stamp it as thoroughly Italian. In the same way, the leg proportions and contours of *b*, the front stretcher and seatrail with filleted edges, the filleted edges of the whole back, and the contiguous ellipse pattern of the back are peculiarly Italian. The essentially Italian characteristics of *c* appear in the recessed stretcher (in chairs of this date), the blocked bases of the backposts, the slightly concaved surfaces of the backposts and toprail and, above all, in the playful perspective carving of cypresses and arch filling the upper part of the back. In *d* the same evidence of origin occurs in the contours of the turned front legs, the presence of the recessed stretcher, the fluted and rosetted tops of the front legs, the pulpy, naturalistic carving running across and dropping below

the seatrail, the fluted bases of the backposts, the beaded edges and concaved surfaces of the sides, top and bottom of the back square, and the bit of naturalistic carving that forms a cresting for the straight toprail. The splat might well be English of an earlier date. A further distinguishing Italian feature of *d* is that it was once gaily painted.

Of the early nineteenth century chairs in Plate 83, a is a superb North Italian specimen, of Directoire inspiration, with scarcely a trace of what might be called "provincialism." Of walnut stained to simulate mahogany, it is stamped as Italian by the gilding of the delicate beadings and rosettes. *B* and the two chairs in *c* are of walnut; the curves and patterns of their backs alone are enough to set their origin beyond all question and, in the case of the two chairs in *c*, there is the additional evidence of the leg contours which are unmistakable.

The mahogany and gold chair in Plate 84a is another example devoid of any suggestion of provincialism, although the marks of nationality are not to be mistaken in the eight-sided tapered front legs with turned feet; the outward curve of the back legs; the eight-sided tapering backposts terminating in gilded pineapples; the pinched necking of the front legs; and the broad toprail and narrow cross splat with relief ornament in gold. The armchair of Plate 84b is of such thoroughly Empire character that little opportunity is left for the display of national peculiarities. However, the general

exuberance of design in the carved decoration and the lively facility of its rendering, along with the sweeping outward curve of the back legs and the rapidity of their tapering, settle the matter of Italian authorship beyond any question.

Stools, both moderately high to sit upon and low to rest the feet upon, were made closely corresponding in fashion with the chairs of the period. These stools were both oblong and square; less frequently they were round.

SOFAS, SETTEES AND BENCHES

The sofas and settees of the Neo-Classic era exhibited no less variety of form and opulence of imagination than did the chairs of the same period. They were made of walnut, carved and sometimes parcel gilt, or of some other wood and painted with polychrome decorations. Some of the sofas were upholstered, seat, back and arms; others had open backs and only the seats upholstered; and still others were caned. Amongst chair-back settees, especially, the variety is amazing. While a few of the sofas and settees were very long—a survival of the old tradition—the majority of them were of about the same length as sofas and settees of the same date in England and France. There were likewise many that were very short.

In Plate 85a is shewn one of the shorter kind, a two-chairback settee of walnut. The blocked and tapered straight legs with turned feet, the baluster-turned

armposts, and the wholly unsophisticated arms—all of them quite typically Italian—seem scarcely to belong to the back of finer craftsmanship and more finished design. The raised toprail with minute-flowered carved garlands and the interlaced ellipse splats maintain the Italian quality of the rest of the piece. The triple-chairback settee (Plate 85b) with boldly outflared arms has the fillets at the edges of legs, stretchers, seatrail, arms and other parts of the frame already mentioned in connexion with the chair in Plate 82b. The flare of the arms is an Italian peculiarity; a number of loose cushions were intended to be used with arms of this form. The sofa of Directoire fashion (Plate 85c) differs from the usual lines of the well known French prototype in the contour of the arms. There is a curve just above the line of the seat and then the end of the arm continues *straight* to the top; the arms of French sofas of this sort have a continuous swinging curve that never stops from the seat to the top of the arm. The back, too, is slightly raised, the rise beginning before the arm joins the back, and the back is divided into three panels.

The long backless settee with roll-over arms (Plate 86a) and fluted tapered legs is one of those simple and agreeable country-house pieces of which so many were made during the Neo-Classic era. The triple-chair-back settee (Plate 86b) with turned and tapered legs is a blithesome translation of Sheraton forms into a North Italian expression and was once resplendent

A. Late Eighteenth Century Two Square-Chairback Settee, Interlaced Splats
B. Late Eighteenth Century Triple Chairback Settee, Walnut, Arcaded Top Panels, Wide-flared Arms
C. Early Nineteenth Century Walnut Sofa, French Directoire Inspiration
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A

B

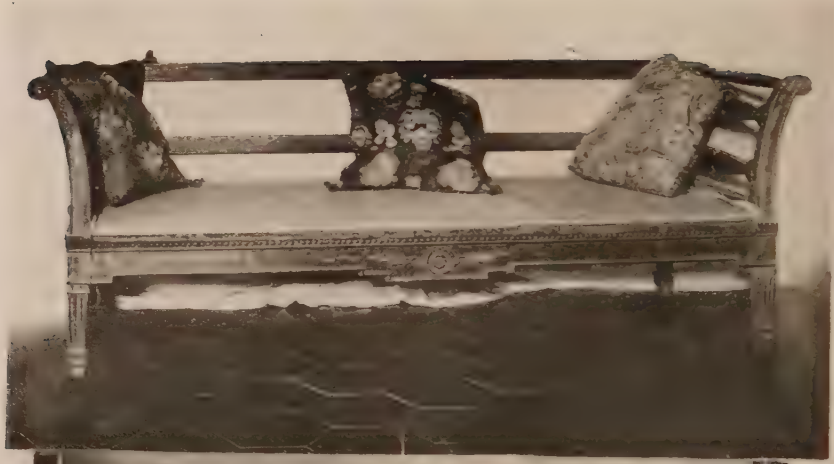
A. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Backless Settee or *Chaise-longue*, Roll Ends and Pierced Splats
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

B. Late Eighteenth Century Painted and Gilt Triple Square-Chairback Settee
Courtesy of Cooper Institute Museum, New York City

A. Late Eighteenth Century Triple Chairback Settee, Walnut, Caned Seat and Pierced Cross Splats. B. Early Nineteenth Century Walnut Settee, French Directoire Inspiration, Upholstered Panel Across Back, Lion Masque Arms

Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

A



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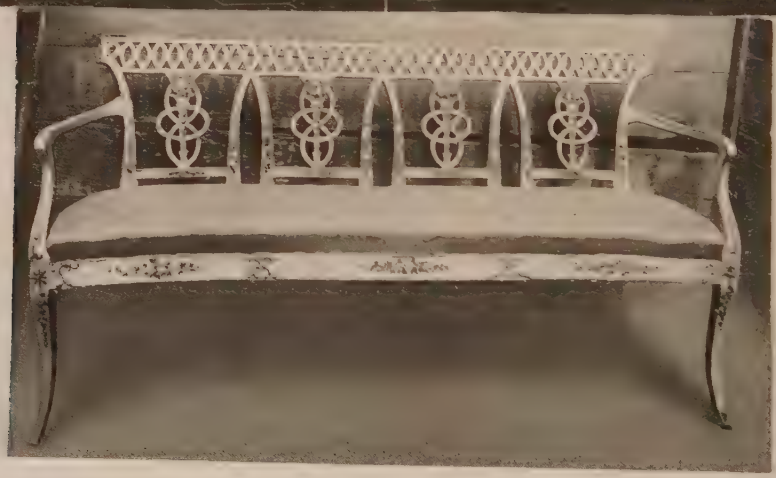


A. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Settee, "Louis Seize" Influence. B. Late Eighteenth Century Quadruple Chairback Painted Settee, Hepplewhite and French Directoire Influence

with color and gold. Whatever Sheratonesque precedents may be traced elsewhere, the form of the lyre splats is purely a product of the maker's exuberant fancy.

No less interesting is the triple-chairback settee (Plate 87a) which affords still another entertaining phase of square back composition. Such features as the square tapered legs with tiny turned feet, the baluster-turned armposts and the slightly shaped arms are all typical of late Italian usage, but the point of chief interest is in the manner in which the bases of the three chair backs are kept separate by splitting the side members into V-shaped pieces, separately supported on coupled blocks resting on the seatrail—a device without structural cause and indulged in purely for effect. The early nineteenth century triple-chairback settee with upholstered back and padded arms (Plate 87b), quite obviously derived from the precedent of the curule chair, is one of the loveliest examples of Italian furniture design of that period. Every feature has been studied with the utmost care and wrought with consummate elegance—the turned, tapered and fluted legs with flaring acanthus tops above the stretcher; the delicate turned and reeded stretchers; the Y-shaped armposts rising from acanthus bases; the arms terminating in lion masques; and the bold, raking sweep of the back.

The gaily painted four-chairback settee (Plate 88b) of unmistakable Hepplewhite inspiration, quite

apart from the manner of its polychrome decoration, displays all the Italian individualities of contour, proportion and interpretation, to so many of which attention has already been directed, and the accustomed spontaneity of fresh combination of *motifs* in which Italian furniture makers always excelled. The walnut settee of Louis XVI kinship (Plate 88a), though obviously the work of a provincial chairmaker and lacking the courtly elegance of some of the other furniture of the same period, has a certain robust grace and *naïveté* of line that are thoroughly engaging. The sturdy portions and the contour of the fluted legs are characteristically Italian, and so is the manner of the carved decoration on the seatrail.

To the same conglomerate species of Neo-Classic settee belongs the example in Plate 89a which has Hepplewhite front legs, backposts that are a cross between Hepplewhite and Directoire, and lyre-vase fretted splats that are purely a product of the maker's ingenious fancy. The walnut and parcel-gilt triple-chairback settee, in 89b, of Sheraton affinities is purer in its consistency with the manner of design by which it was inspired, although, quite apart from the pattern of the modified vase splats, the hand of the Italian craftsman is plainly apparent in the fine acanthus tops of the legs, the vigorous projection of the collared foot, the sharp recession from the collar to the bottom of the foot, and the broadly grooved or concaved surface of the arms and members of the back. This same

A. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Triple Chairback Settee, Caned Seat, Pierced Lyre Splats
Courtesy of Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia and New York City

B. Late Eighteenth Century Walnut Triple Square-chairback Settee, Pierced Vase-shaped Splats
Courtesy of Lavezzo and Brother, New York City

sort of typical concaving may be seen in Plate 85a, 82b and c, 81a, 80c, and 78d.

Of all the many beautiful and varied forms in which Italian Neo-Classic settees were fashioned, few could excel or even equal the elegance and playful grace displayed by the example shewn in Plate 64b. Although the design is virtually identical with one in Sheraton's book, and although there is a difference of opinion amongst experts as to whether it is to be considered English or Italian, the whole manner of execution seems to indicate the latter origin with sufficient force to justify its classification as an Italian piece.

The woodwork is painted white and dull green with touches of gold here and there as accents. The Ionic capitals of the tapered, fluted legs are much more in accord with Italian fecundity of imagination than with English usage, and the fanciful character of the back, with garlands, scrolls and eagles—structurally unconvincing and open to serious criticism, but wonderfully effective and pleasing to the eye—is altogether in agreement with Italian practice. English furniture designs were closely studied in late eighteenth century Italy, and either copied or adapted. English pattern books, also, were assiduously used and the models they supplied were interpreted more or less accurately by the Italian craftsmen, but always with a plainly perceptible Italian accent. In the present instance, while the design may be wholly English, the manner in which it is uttered is Italian. The freedom of the curves and

the spontaneous swing of all the lines in the back coincide temperamentally with Italian ways rather than with the decorous elegance of English workmanship.

BEDSTEADS

Italian bedsteads of the Neo-Classic era were of various types. Notwithstanding their love of variety, their tastes for experimental ventures, and their readiness to try out new fashions, the Italians are an inherently conservative people. Consequently old types often continued in favour and were made along with the newer modes. Hence it was that the four-poster type of bedstead, characteristic of an earlier era was also made in the Neo-Classic age, only the posts were slenderer, the proportions were thinned down and the detail of decoration was brought into conformity with the tastes of the day. Not much of the framework was visible; the sumptuous brocades and damasks of the tester and curtains were the items most in evidence. Printed linens and gaily figured chintzes were likewise used for bed hangings.

The bedsteads really typical of the period were of two varieties. One was the type patterned after contemporary French models, which brought the draperies into a sort of diminishing canopy or dome at the top finished off with a round crown of plumes or a smaller turban-like contrivance of fabric. The canopy and crown were supported by curved metal rods rising from the bedstead or else by rods attached to the wall.

The bedsteads under these canopies were often placed sidewise against the wall and had straight or slightly flared headboards and footboards of about equal height similar to those of the French Louis Seize and Directoire bedsteads or, a little later, like those of the Empire "sleigh" bedsteads. Sometimes the bedsteads had the headboard against the wall and the canopy extending only over the head of the bed.

The other variety of bedstead characteristic of the period had a straight-topped headboard and a straight-topped footboard, the footboard lower than the headboard, in the manner shewn in Plate 68b. The flutings, rosettes and other details of decoration corresponded with the fashion of ornamentation in vogue for other furniture at the period.

SPANISH FURNITURE

SPANISH FURNITURE

SPANISH furniture, although it displays many points of Latin family resemblance with contemporary Italian furniture, is nevertheless quite distinct in its general aspect, and even during the Rococo and Neo-Classic episodes, when both Italy and Spain were taking their cue from French fashions, Spanish furniture had an individuality of its own so that its Spanish identity could not usually be mistaken.

Old Spanish furniture has four outstanding qualities—*dignity, concentrated interest, vigour* and *intrinsic sufficiency.* The last named quality, in the manner of a corollary, proceeds as a necessary consequence from the other three. There is enough dignity, enough interest and enough vigour combined in each individual piece to make it sufficient, in its own right, to command attention and respect.

Comparatively little Spanish furniture made prior to 1500 is now to be found, and what little there is may be said to be almost wholly of an ecclesiastical nature. At this date the influence of the Italian Renaissance was perceptible in furniture design only to a slight extent; although the effects of the Renaissance were easily to be traced in many other ways from 1500 onwards, in furniture the old Moorish and native Spanish characteristics remained dominant for a long

time. What portion of furniture design was affected by the new principles being mainly ecclesiastical, the best examples of it are to be found in some of the choir stalls of the period. It was not until a considerably later date that Italian Renaissance influence made itself felt to any great degree in Spanish domestic furnishings.

One noticeable characteristic of Spanish Renaissance furniture is that it almost wholly lacked the architectural qualities of early Italian Renaissance furniture. It was singularly devoid of such embellishments as pilasters, capitals, plinths, cornices, friezes and entablatures. As may be seen by an examination of the illustrations, there was an almost total lack of such an architectural amenity as even mouldings. As may be imagined then, the strong point of early Spanish furniture lay not in subtlety of line and graceful elegance of contour; its dominant qualities were stoutness of structure and splendour of decoration.

Another peculiarity of Spanish furniture is to be found in the relatively small variety of pieces that were found sufficient for all ordinary needs. In Spain, until a very late date, people seem always to have been quite content with far fewer sorts of articles than were commonly used in other countries, and even in the late eighteenth century, when French styles were paramount in furnishing and everything else, certain pieces of furniture, such as day-beds, for example, were never accepted at all.

Neither were chests of drawers, sideboards or china-cupboards objects that found any degree of favour in Spain, and their lack of popularity made their numbers noticeably fewer than in other countries. Neither were commodes employed in furnishing eighteenth century salons with the same freedom as elsewhere.

Owing to this peculiarity of Spanish tastes and requirements, we may restrict our classification of the major articles of Spanish furniture to tables, chairs, benches, bedsteads, *vargueño* cabinets, *armarios* or cupboards and chests. The chest as a receptacle for the storage of clothing and household goods maintained its popularity undiminished throughout the entire period under consideration, and even to-day it is said that in many country houses throughout Spain chests are commonly used for putting away clothing in preference to chests of drawers.

The small number of standard articles of furniture does not mean, however, that there is any lack of variety. Of nearly every sort there were almost endless varieties. Amongst chests, for example, there was to be found the widest diversity. Some of them, for instance, were so high and so long that they could readily be used in lieu of sideboards or *credenze* and, as a matter of fact, many of them were so used. *Vargueño* cabinets and *armarios* displayed an equal diversity of fashion, and of benches the variations were legion.

In structure and, to some extent, in the matter of design there was a long-continuing preference for small

panel divisions—an heritage from the days of Moorish ascendency. Even after the Moorish power was broken in Spain, much of the furniture making remained in the hands of Moorish craftsmen and they naturally perpetuated the methods of joinery and design to which they had been accustomed.

In the matter of decoration, too, there long persisted a marked bias toward geometrical *motifs* and patterns contrived on a geometrical basis. This early reticence in the use of naturalistic *motifs,* whether of Classic or other derivation, is also to be ascribed to Moorish influence and, of course, can readily be understood through the Mohammedan disapproval of representing the human form or other natural objects. The *Mudéjar* furniture—the furniture of Christian Spain strongly tinctured by Moorish influences—shews a wonderful wealth of gorgeous pattern but is quite different from contemporary Renaissance Italian furniture in the basis of its design, which is geometrical as opposed to the Italian use of naturalistic *motifs* more or less conventionalised, along with features adapted from architectural usage.

THE RENAISSANCE

BACKGROUNDS OF THE SPANISH RENAISSANCE

THE typical Spanish interior of the Renaissance, and even of the Baroque age that followed it, was always virile and distinctly positive in tone. Oftentimes, indeed, its clean-cut, articulate emphasis was carried to the extent of ruggedness. Mere 'prettiness' was a thing never aimed at nor even conceived of as the remotest possibility or a thing to be desired. There was none of that feminine daintiness and suave pliability, none of that polished elegance of a multitude of little perfections, in which the French interior of the eighteenth century excelled. Life was stern, splendid, gorgeous or imposing, as the case might be, but it was not filled up with an host of complex and artificial trivialities. Even when life was luxurious, it was luxurious in a broad and simple fashion and always attended with stately dignity. The course of events moved forward with majestic and deliberate tread. If luxury and sumptuous display were in evidence, they appeared in a masculine manifestation. This view of life was plainly reflected by the Spanish interior in all its phases.

"Ordinarily the Spanish interior, whether in the great villa and castle or in the smaller and humbler country houses, was apt to be austere in its general aspect. At times it was austere even to the extent of positive severity. Its architectural character was always evident and no one could be unconscious of the dominating quality of walls, floor and ceiling. It could be gorgeous—intensely gorgeous—as it often was, with splendid carving, painting and magnificent hangings, but the gorgeousness, by whatever means it might be compassed, was tempered by judicious restraint. It

was rich in dramatic values and dramatic contrasts. Spain is a land of sharp contrasts in nature, and this extrordinarily clear-cut definition of environment could not well help but find an echoing note in the architecture. Furthermore, the Spanish interior was essentially simple in its organism in that it was unmistakably articulate and free of all complexities. And this simplicity could go hand in hand with the richest decoration, which never lost its coherence; simplicity, in this respect, was not incompatible with opulent ornament. Strong architectural lines supplied the requisite balance and the decoration, however intricate in itself, only served to stress the structural straightforwardness. Above all, there was an air of spacious tranquillity quite irrespective of the size of the rooms."

Introduction, H. D. Eberlein, to
Spanish Interiors, Furniture and Details.

Renaissance Spanish floors were paved with brick, stone or tiles; they were likewise made of wood. Wood was more likely to be used for the floors of the upper storeys while brick, stone and tiles were more in favour for the paving of ground floor rooms. Both bricks and stone were often laid so as to form definite patterns. The flooring tiles were small and, though they exhibited some slight diversity of colouring and pattern, striking polychrome effects were not aimed at and the tiled floors were not conspicuous for either colour or pattern. Their accent was rather in the direction of substantial structural support.

The field of the wall was generally of plain plaster, but we can see that there was no lack of rich colour and pattern when we remember that it was quite a common practice to have dadoes—many of them were

of considerable height—formed of brilliant polychrome tiles with geometrical figures or some conventionalised repeat. These repeats might be complete in one tile unit or might require two or four tiles to compose the entire subject. Besides being used for dadoes, polychrome tiles frequently appeared as facings for doorways and windows—window reveals and window seats occasionally being entirely encrusted with them—the facings and linings of cupboard niches and the enrichment of lavabo-niches in dining-rooms, and the decoration of steps, usually the risers but sometimes for risers and treads alike. Now and again the plaster walls were frescoed, but the practice of fresco mural decoration was never nearly so much employed in Spain as it was in Italy and the really typical Spanish Renaissance wall was of plain plaster between dado and frieze or between dado and ceiling, as the frieze was frequently dispensed with.

Over the plaster field of the wall there were often movable adornments in the form of splendid hangings. No nation, perhaps, was ever more addicted to the profuse display of wall-hangings than the Spaniards.

"There were, to begin with, tapestries, for tapestries were the common possession of all civilised countries and were esteemed alike in all. There were 'fine Italian hangings,' which meant brocades, damasks and velvet, the last named of which materials, when hung as a wall embellishment, was usually enriched with embroidery in the form of *appliqué* medallions, cartouches and the like, with an appropriate accompaniment of scrolls, tendrils and arabesques of gold thread

or gold galons. When the ground was a rich crimson or a full, brilliant green velvet, this form of wall decoration, often enlivened with armorial bearings as a part of the *appliqué* needlework, was both dignified and effective.

"There were painted canvas hangings which presented both vivid colour and emphatic design. There were painted and scalloped canvas friezes or scalloped velvet frieze hangings rich with gold braid and fringe. There was—and this was peculiarly distinctive of Spain, although the fashion afterwards spread to other countries—the gorgeous stamped and engraved leather, polychromed and, later on, polychromed and gilt. The skins were either sewed together to make hangings or else the pieces of leather were applied directly to the wall. Add to these, 'India fabrics,' doubtless brought in from Portugal, 'delicate summer hangings,' Toledo cloths, red and yellow, and Roman linens, and it becomes quite plain that the Spanish interior, although it might display certain evidences of austerity, at times, and a sparseness of movables as compared with the fashions of other countries, was by no means void of interest."

Practical Book of Interior Decoration:
Eberlein, McClure, and Holloway.

Fireplaces exhibited virtually the same lines of structure and ornamentation as were to be found in Italy and France at about the same time, although there were, of course, plenty of evidences of national interpretation in the matter of details. The doorways were sometimes of wood, sometimes of stone, and there were also doorways of intricately modelled and carved plasterwork, a kind of decoration known as *yesería* which was quite distinctive of Spain. These *yesería* decorations were likewise used for window openings

and occasionally appeared as friezes. Ordinarily this carved plaster was left uncoloured. Wrought ironwork in the shape of grilles for windows and openings, and as handrails, frequently added a strong decorative emphasis, especially when colour and gilding were added to their silhouette value, as was often the case.

The ceilings were not seldom of panelled pine and, time and again, these panelled ceilings constituted the principal enrichment of an old Spanish room. These ceilings displayed a system of minute divisions and intricate geometrical shapes, derived from Moorish antecedents, and were altogether peculiar to Spain. The same sort of intricate panelling in small divisions enriched many interior doors and shutters in Spanish Renaissance houses. Although carving, colour and gilding were by no means unknown as enrichments for Spanish Renaissance ceilings and doors, and were of more and more frequent occurrence as the sixteenth century neared its close, these resources were much less generally used for old Spanish domestic interiors than is commonly supposed. The small and infinitely varied panel divisions, with their rich play of light and shadow, were ordinarily esteemed sufficient embellishment without carving, colour or gold.

SPANISH RENAISSANCE FURNITURE

ARTICLES IN USE

The articles of furniture commonly in use in Renaissance Spain included *vargueño* cabinets, *armarios* or cupboards, chests, bedsteads, benches, chairs and

tables. Besides these there were brasiers, caskets of all sorts and a full complement of candelabra, candlesticks, picture frames and the like.

MATERIALS

The staple material for Spanish Renaissance furniture was walnut. Next in importance and popularity

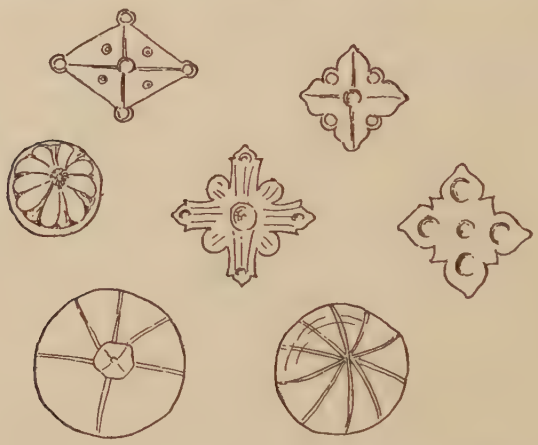


Fig. 19.—Typical Spanish Wrought Iron and Brass Nail Heads

came oak. Pine was also used not a little and, in the north, a considerable quantity of chestnut was employed. In Majorca a good deal of pine, of fine grain and deep red colour, was used for furniture making. In addition to these woods there was wrought iron which appeared in the shape of braces for tables and benches and as fretted mounts for the fronts of *vargueño* cabinets. There were also beautifully wrought brass-headed nails and studdings for the furniture, and there were the velvets and other fabrics used for under-

laying fretted iron mounts and for covering chests as well as the tooled leather for chair seats, benches and casket covers (Fig. 19).

STRUCTURE AND CONTOUR

In structure Spanish Renaissance furniture was robust and stoutly put together. In contour it was altogether rectilinear, save for a few of the chests or *arcóns* that had arched or domed lids. There were no attempts at curved forms such as we see in some of the early Italian boat-shaped or sarcophagus-shaped *cassoni, cassoni* with domed or "raised" lids, and writing tables or *banconi* with in-curving bases.

DECORATIVE PROCESSES

The decorative processes employed for the embellishment of Spanish Renaissance furniture were comparatively few in number, but they were of vastly diversified application. They included panelling, painting, gilding, inlay with bone or ivory, carving, turning, covering with tooled leather, underlaying fretted metal mounts with velvet, and the use of brass mounts.

TYPES OF DECORATION

First and foremost came *motifs* of geometrical character. These were of almost endless variety and shewed the greatest ingenuity of varied combinations. Next came sundry conventionalised forms akin to the leaf and flower forms that appeared in conventionalised shape on the glazed and polychromed tiles. Intricate shapes for small panels by themselves constituted an

important part of the decorative repertoire. There were also leaf and flower forms more or less modified from Classic and Italian precedents, but the wealth of arabesques and other Classic motifs so richly exhibited by sixteenth century Italian furniture found few echoes in the contemporary furniture of the Iberian peninsula. Cockle or escallop shells also filled an important rôle as decorative *motifs*.

MOUNTS

Beautifully fretted, modelled and engraved iron mounts were used in great profusion on the fronts of *vargueño* cabinets and, to a lesser extent, on some of the chests. Many of these fretted mounts were underlaid with pieces of red velvet which greatly enhanced their decorative effect. Sometimes they were also gilded. For the studdings of chairs, benches and chests, both iron and brass mounts were used, and the pulls and knobs of doors were of either wrought iron or brass.

FINISH

The usual finish for furniture that was neither painted nor gilt was to rub it down with olive oil and then wipe off the residual moisture. Wax, too, was used as a dressing and polish.

VARGUEÑO CABINETS

The *vargueño* cabinet is the most distinctively Spanish piece of furniture that can be named. It is just as essentially Spanish as the embroidered bolero

of the torreador or the fan, castanets and lace mantilla of the Castillian dancer. In the fifteenth century, it is said, the artificers of the little town of Vargas or Bargas, near Toledo, devised a kind of cabinet better than any of the chests or hutches previously known, and so justly famous did it become that the name of the town in adjective form—*vargueño* or *bargueño*—was thenceforth attached to cabinets of this type to denote their style and peculiar combination of merits. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the manufacture of *vargueño* cabinets continued and reached the highest point of excellence.

The *vargueño* seems to have been derived from the small hutch or treasure cabinet and the little sliding drawers it contains, which constitute an essential and characteristic feature of its structure, are to be ascribed in their origin to the Moors, it seems. Indeed, the entire contrivance of the *vargueño* cabinet's structure and the earliest fashion of its ornamentation must apparently be credited to a Moorish origin. It was universally esteemed in every Spanish household, and it was the progenitor of various later pieces of furniture, amongst others the falling-front secretary, so that its influence upon furniture history and development extended far beyond the bounds of the Spanish province where it was first popularised.

In principle the *vargueño* cabinet was nothing but a rectangular box with one side hinged at the bottom; when this hinged side was let down it disclosed tiers

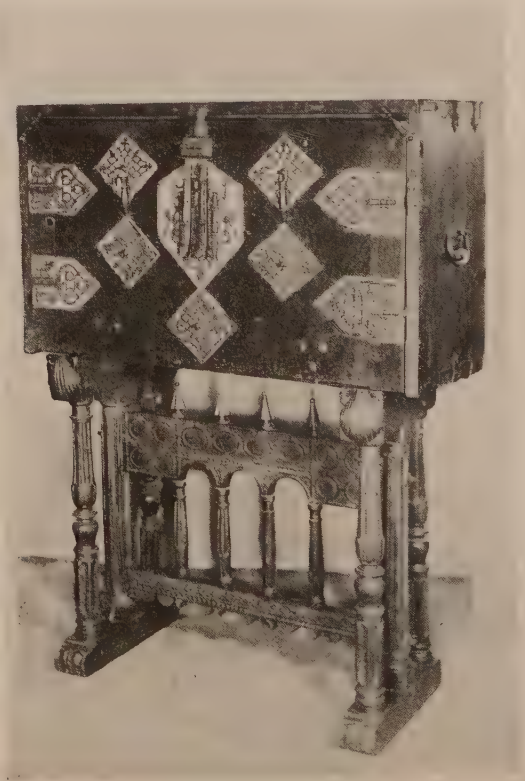
of little sliding drawers which, later on, came to be supplemented by several open pigeonholes or by a little cupboard with an hinged door. One of the earliest types of *vargueño* cabinet is shewn in Plate 95a. In the first place, it is small enough to be easily portable when closed, and the earliest *vargueño* cabinets, intended to hold jewels and other valuables, seem to have been made with the idea of easy transportation in mind.

The *vargueño* in Plate 95a is of the simplest type of construction and contains three tiers of three shallow drawers each. Ordinarily the outside of the early cabinets was either not decorated at all or else ornamented only very sparingly; even the later and much larger cabinets, which gradually came to be looked upon as permanent pieces of furniture not to be moved about, had their exterior decoration confined to the front and to the metal corner mounts (Plates 90a, 90b, 91a and 94a), while the ends were fitted with drop handles by which the cabinet could be lifted. The cabinet in 94a, which is an unusually ornate specimen, has the edge and corner mounts extended into fretted plates lapping over the ends, but this end embellishment can scarcely be considered typical. All the wealth of exuberant decoration was reserved for the inside.

The little cabinet in Plate 95a was evidently an object of special pride and care on the part of its maker for, in addition to the customary interior decoration, the outside ends and top bear geometrical patterns in bone inlay. The "grains of wheat" and geometrical

A

B



A. Sixteenth Century *Vargueño* Cabinet on Carved Walnut Stand (Open)

B. The Same Closed

Courtesy of Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia and New York City

A

B

A. Sixteenth Century *Vargueño* Cabinet on Polychrome Hutch Stand with Carved Feet. B. Sixteenth Century *Vargueño* Cabinet (Hinged Side Missing) with Polychrome Bone Inlay, on Hutch Stand with Turned Feet
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

Sixteenth Century *Vargueño* Cabinet (Hinged Side Missing) on Table Stand with Turned Splayed Legs and Wrought Iron Braces
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut *Vargueño* Cabinet, Renaissance Influence in Carving; Carved Walnut H-shaped Trestle Stand
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

PLATE 94

A

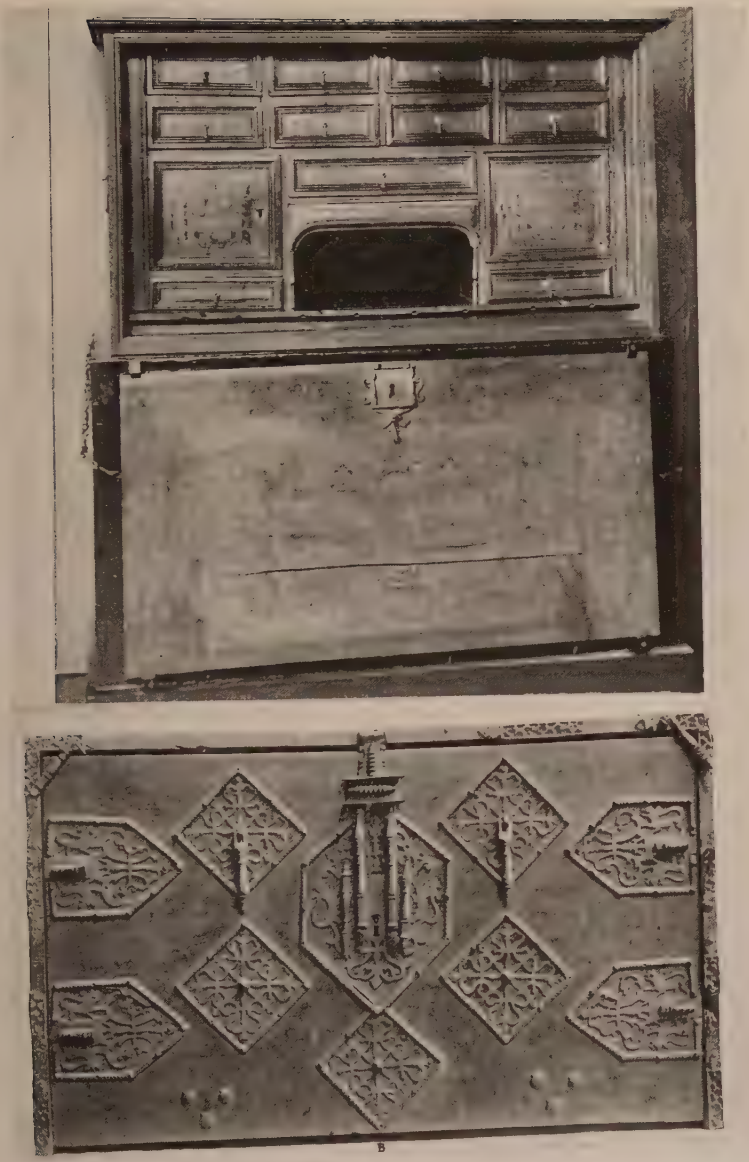
B

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut *Vargueño* Cabinet, Polychrome Bone Inlay on Inner Front; Hinged Side (Dropped) with Fretted Silver Mounts.
B. Late Sixteenth Century *Vargueño* Cabinet with Lifting Lid, Medallions and Arabesques on Blue Ground, Purely Renaissance Influence;

A

B

A. Fifteenth or Early Sixteenth Century Walnut *Vargueño* Cabinet of Archaic Type, Inlaid with Bone in Moorish Manner. B. Hinged Side of Sixteenth Century *Vargueño* Cabinet Inlaid with *Motifs* of Perso-Moorish Derivation
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington



A. Late Sixteenth or Early Seventeenth Century Walnut *Vargueño* Cabinet with *Intarsia* Decoration, Shewing Architectural Influence of the Renaissance in the Mouldings. B. Hinged Side of Sixteenth Century Walnut *Vargueño* Cabinet with Intricately Fretted Wrought Iron Mounts Underlaid with Red Velvet

Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A

B

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut *Papelera* with *Intarsia* Decorations
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Mudéjar *Papelera* with Geometrical Bone Inlay
Courtesy of William Helburn, Inc. (from Mueblos Antiguos Españoles)

patterns of the bone inlay on the drawer fronts and the inner surface of the hinged side or falling front are characteristically Moorish, and this type of embellishment in bone or ivory is altogether attributable to the Moors. From Spain the art of bone and ivory inlay was carried to the Certosa of Pavia, whence the fashion spread in Italy and came to be known as *Certosina* decoration. It will be noticed that this little cabinet is entirely devoid of mouldings of any sort. Neither is there any architectural influence of any sort to be discovered in its design.

Vargueño cabinets were made of walnut with a smooth exterior surface, ordinarily quite plain save for the metal mounts applied (Plates 90a, 90b, 91a and 93). These metal mounts consisted of locks, keyplates, pulls, bolt plates, edge and corner mounts, nail heads and three or four other plates applied for purely decorative purposes. All these mounts were on the exterior of the hinged side or falling front, whichever one chooses to call it. There were also the drop handles on each end. Careful examination of Plates 90b and 91a will shew the typical manner of these mounts—the large lock at the top with a large plate occupying the central space; two pear-drop pulls hanging from fretted plates at the top on each side of the lock; two bolt plates at each end of the front; three ornamental fretted plates beneath the lock plate and the drop pulls; and three small nails at the bottom, on each side, driven clean through the wood and holding the hinges in place.

With the exception of the hinge nails, all the other mounts are underlaid with pieces of velvet, usually red or deep crimson. These mounts of wrought and fretted iron were often gilt; sometimes they were of silver. How elaborate in pattern they sometimes were can be seen by the example shewn in Plate 94a.

In the more elaborate and larger examples the drawer fronts were often intricately inlaid with bone and further adorned with little carved pilasters and semi-engaged columns (Plates 92 and 94a), while occasionally pediments made their appearance over the central door or drawer (Plates 91b and 92). These incipient architectural *motifs* betoken a somewhat later origin than the plain geometrical design of the cabinet in Plate 95a; the architecturalising influence of the Italian Renaissance had begun to take visible effect. The geometrical bone inlay was often a blaze of gorgeous colour—vermilion, light green, dark blue and gold, as well as the white of the bone or ivory. Gilding was usually applied to the little pilasters, colonnettes and pediments (Plates 90a, 91b, 92 and 94a). In addition to the coloured bone, the white surfaces were often engraved with minute designs in black.

In some cases the exterior of the falling front or hinged side was enriched with inlaid patterns in designs evidently akin to the semi-conventional floral, animal and architectural devices of Persian and Mogul provenance (Plate 95b) although, as previously stated, elaborate exterior decoration was not very general

apart from the use of fretted metal mounts underlaid with velvet (Plate 96b). Another sort of exterior decoration for the falling front may be seen in Plate 94b. Here the rich inlaid design is altogether geometrical and of distinctly Moorish origin; the fronts of the inner drawers, on the other hand, plainly shew the Renaissance influence in the manner of their decoration. There are mouldings, and the carved *motifs,* in addition to the portrait medallions, are altogether of Renaissance character. The grounds against which the heads are displayed are light blue and the rest of the decoration exhibits a good deal of colour. This cabinet is unusual also in the fact that it has a lifting lid as well as a falling front.

The cabinet shewn in Plate 96 also proclaims its late sixteenth century date and the effects of the Italian Renaissance through its mouldings, the cornice-like projection of its top, the *intarsia* decorations of its drawer and door fronts and the little pear-drop pulls of the drawers. The arrangement of pigeonhole and cupboards, too, is of later character than the primitive scheme of tiers of shallow drawers regularly placed as in Plate 95a.

The *vargueño* cabinet shewn in Plate 93 affords another clear instance of the effects of the Italian Renaissance upon Spanish furniture of the sixteenth century. The Italian architectural quality is plainly evident in the mouldings that surround the drawer fronts and in the arabesque *motifs* carved over the

entire front. The technique of the carving and the interpretation of the *motifs,* however, are purely Spanish.

Vargueño cabinets ordinarily stood on one or the other of three kinds of bases or supports. One of these was the table or stand, in the manner of that shewn in Plate 92. The particular stand there illustrated is of late sixteenth or early seventeenth century date, but there were many earlier table-stands of this sort on which the cabinets were placed. There were also the carved trestle stands, with arcaded braces or stretchers, like those shewn in Plates 90a, 90b and 93. These trestle stands, which were made especially to support *vargueño* cabinets, had pulls or slides which could be drawn out from the top billets or blocks, on which the cabinet rested, to support the falling front when it was let down, thus affording a convenient place to write. The manner in which these slides worked is shewn in Plate 90a. The ends of these slides were often carved with heads or lion masques (Plate 93) or, more commonly, with scallop shells (Plates 90a and 90b). Carved cabinet stands of this sort reflected the architectural tendency due to the fashions of the Italian Renaissance.

The third kind of cabinet stand, of early date, was that to be seen in Plates 91a and 91b. Stands of this sort had drawers or cupboards with doors. When there were drawers they were generally four in number and of considerable depth. They stood usually upon turned (Plate 91b) or carved (Plate 91a) feet and, in the toprail, just above the two upper drawers,

there were slides with carved ends (Plate 91a) that could be pulled out to support the falling-front of the cabinet in the same manner as the slides of the trestle stands already mentioned.

These hutch bases or under-cabinets were not at all architectural in the character of their design; their affinities were all rather with the bone-inlaid, coloured and gilt Moorish drawer fronts of the cabinets above them. Although their decoration was rarely quite so rich as that of the cabinet's drawer fronts, it was devised in the same general manner (Plates 91a and 91b). Not only were the drawer fronts themselves of these bases inlaid and coloured, but the stiles and rails also bore inlaid and coloured decoration (Plates 91a and 91b).

It is easy to see how the combination of the cabinet with this last described sort of base might readily suggest either the tall two-bodied cabinet or the writing cabinet with falling front and either doors or drawers below.

THE PAPELERA AND WRITING FURNITURE

Very nearly related to the *vargueño* cabinet was the *papelera*. Strictly speaking, a *papelera* was any sort of cabinet for papers and documents, stationery and writing materials. The name might, indeed, be applied to a *vargueño* cabinet and the usual *papelera* was, to all intents and purposes, a *vargueño* cabinet minus the hinged side or falling front, like the piece shewn in Plate 93. Unlike the *vargueño* cabinet, how-

ever, the ordinary *papelera* had turned ball feet (Plates 97a and b) at the corners. The piece in Plate 97a, judging from the portion of lock on top, once had an hinged side or falling front; the *papelera* of Plate 97b falls more nearly within our classification. The drawer fronts of 97a display pure Renaissance influence in the pattern of their *intarsia* decoration, although the interpretation is thoroughly Spanish in feeling; the decoration of the drawer fronts of 97b with geometrical bone inlay patterns is wholly of Moorish character, as is also the arrangement of the drawers and doors after the manner of small panel divisions such as may be found in some of the old ceilings.

In examining the falling-front secretary or writing cabinet (Plate 98a) its close relationship with the *vargueño* cabinet on a hutch or cabinet stand (Plates 91a and b) is plain to be seen. Nothing could be more natural than the course of development from the one to the other, from the earlier *vargueño* to the later secretary. The principle of construction was the same. In the writing cabinet of Plate 98a, however, the strong architectural impulse of the Italian Renaissance appears in the moulded base, the frieze and cornice of the lower body, the arcaded panels of the cupboard in the base, the tiers of carved figures arranged as pilasters at the corners of the upper body, and the fully articulated frieze and cornice of the top. The carved figures at the corners are typically Spanish and reminiscent of the Gothic manner, the carved figures on the

A

B

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut Falling-front Writing Cabinet on Cupboard Base, Shewing Renaissance Architectural Influence
Courtesy of Arte y Decoracion

B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Three-bodied Cabinet, Shewing Renaissance Architectural Influence
Courtesy of William Helburn, Inc. (from Mueblos Antiguos Españoles)

Sixteenth Century Carved, Polychromed and Gilt Book Cupboard, Shewing Renaissance Architectural Influence
Courtesy of Rosenbach Company, Philadelphia and New York City

PLATE 100

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut *Armario* or Hanging Cupboard, Characteristic Spanish Carving, Renaissance Architectural Influence in Mouldings, Moulded Base and Cornice
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

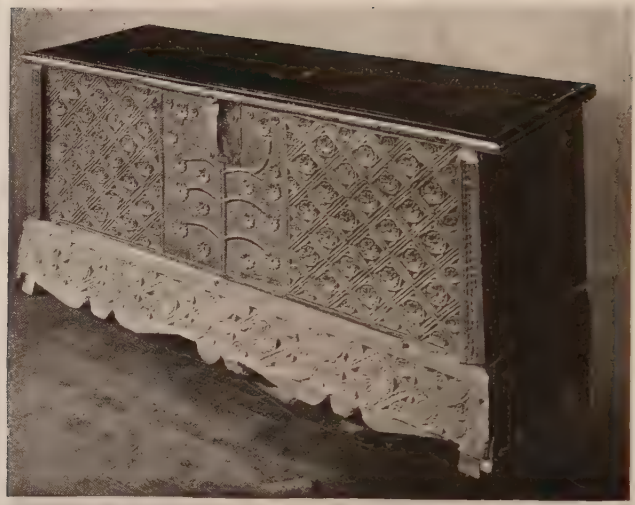
B. Sixteenth Century Cabinet of Walnut, Pine and Oak, Moorish Tradition in Small Panel Divisions
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

Sixteenth Century Carved Walnut *Armario* or Cabinet of Two Bodies. Typical Spanish Carving; Moorish Tradition in Small Panels; Renaissance Architectural Influence in Moulded Base and Cornice
Courtesy of Nicholas Martin, New York City

A

B

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut Monastery Bench, Carved Back and Trestle Legs. B. Early Fifteenth Century Gothic Carved Walnut Bench with Linenfold Panels
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia



B

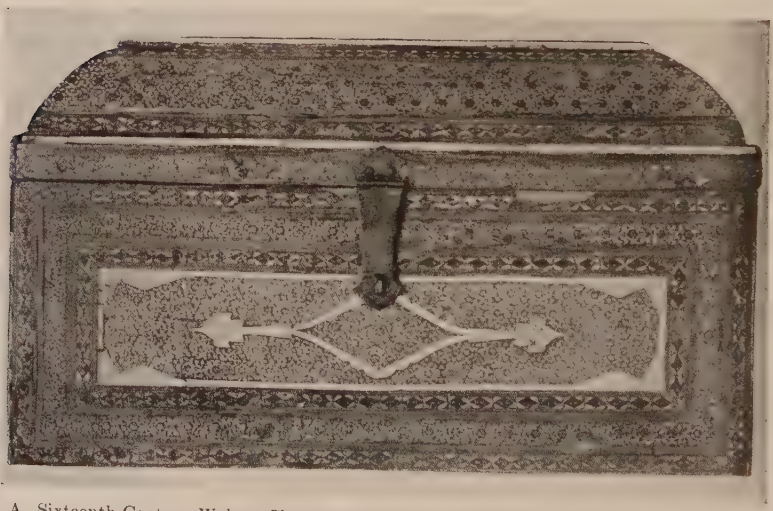
A. Sixteenth Century Walnut Chest with Carved Apron and Small Diapered Pattern on Front

B. Sixteenth Century High Oak Chest with Linenfold Panels
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A. Sixteenth Century Small *Vargueño* Cabinet, Inlaid. B. Sixteenth Century Chest with Arched Lid; Covered with Stamped and Polychromed Leather
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

A

B



A. Sixteenth Century Walnut Chest with Painted Decoration Inside Lid; Sixteenth Century Walnut Chairs, Spindled Backs
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

B. Sixteenth Century Mudéjar Casket with Domed Lid and Bone Inlay
Courtesy of William Helburn, Inc. (from Mueblos Antiguos Españoles)

ends of the slides to support the falling-front when it is lowered and, indeed, the slides themselves are likewise characteristically Spanish, and so also is the elaborately fretted lock just beneath the cornice.

Secretaries or writing cabinets of this type were fairly numerous in the sixteenth century. Just how much the older *vargueño* cabinets were used as writing furniture it is impossible to say. They were ideally contrived for that purpose and certainly suggested secretaries of the type shewn in Plate 98a; in all likelihood, however, they were chiefly used as receptacles for documents and small valuables while a good deal of writing was doubtless done at tables.

ARMARIOS OR CABINETS, BOOK CUPBOARDS AND WARDROBES

Cabinets, cupboards and *armarios* or wardrobes, although all unmistakably belonging to the same family, shewed the widest variation in size and fashion. Some were tall, as in Plates 98b, 100 or 101, and some were low; some had one body (Plates 100 and 101), some had two bodies (Plate 98b); some had only doors, either two full length doors (Plate 100a) or upper and lower divisions with two doors each (Plate 101), and some had both doors and drawers (Plates 98b and 100b). In the classification of cupboards or *armarios* we must include also book cupboards or bookcases (Plate 99).

The cabinet shewn in Plate 98b, though structurally of only two bodies, thanks to its many divisions has the appearance of greater structural complexity. A num-

ber of tall cabinets were made more or less in this manner with the upper body subdivided into two or more parts or tiers, and these compound pieces generally contained both doors and drawers and, likewise very often, niches or recesses as well. The design of

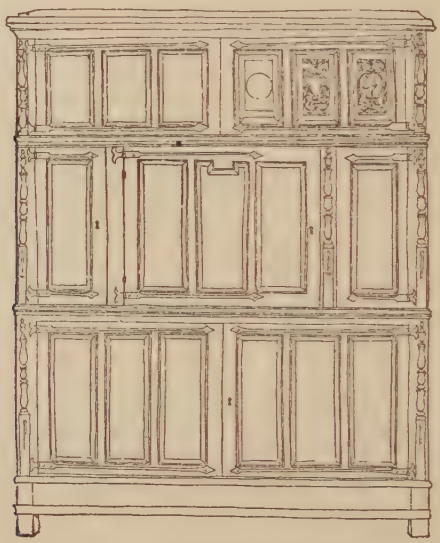


FIG. 20.—Renaissance *Armario* with Three Stages of Doors

the cabinet in 98b shews no traces of remaining Moorish influence; its character evidences the effects of Italian Renaissance principles rendered in a Spanish manner.

The carved walnut *armario* or wardrobe in Plate 100a likewise has few, if any, remaining vestiges of Moorish usage but reflects the architectural principles of furniture design derived from Italian Renaissance precedent. The moulded base, the cornice, the moulding-bordered large panels, and nearly all the *motifs* of

the intricate carving indicate the establishment of architectural conceptions in furniture design and the incorporation of details drawn from Classic precedent. The technique of the carving, the distribution of ornament and the richly carved band between the inner and outer mouldings defining the panels are all characteristically Spanish (cf. also Fig. 20).

The cabinet with door and drawers in Plate 100b exhibits a curious blending of Moorish and purely Renaissance qualities. So far as the design alone is concerned, the many small panel divisions of the front and sides are of Moorish derivation; the curious drops of overlapping leaves at the corners seem to be a semi-Moorish interpretation of a Classic *motif;* and the carving of the two drawer panels, typically Spanish in the manner of execution, is of clearly Classic derivation. This cabinet is furthermore curious in the fact that it is made of pine, walnut and oak in combination.

The tall walnut cabinet with upper and lower divisions, shewn in Plate 101, while proclaiming the architectural impulse of the Italian Renaissance by its cornice, its moulded base, and its gadrooned bracket feet, shews the typical opulence of Spanish carving and attests by its manifold small panel divisions the strong surviving tradition of Moorish joinery. Both this cabinet and the pine, oak and walnut cabinet, shewn in Plate 100b, are striking examples of the Moorish small panel tradition. The Moors learned much of their cunning in joinery from the Coptic joiners of

northern Egypt. The Copts had found, by long experience, that small panels, loosely set, were necessary to combat the shrinking and warping effects of the dry, sun-baked Egyptian climate and hence all Coptic joinery shews the characteristic of small panelling, oftentimes enhanced by intricate and diversified geometrical

Fig. 21.—Renaissance Panelled Low *Armario* or Long Chest

shapes, employed primarily to prevent the cracking of the wood and secondarily as an agency of ornamentation. Though the Spanish climate was not so trying as to make this method of joinery a necessity, the tradition remained and produced a marked effect upon the structure and design of much old Spanish furniture. Although the panel *division* on the doors and sides of the cabinet in Plate 101 is not structural but merely *indicated* for decorative ends, the design is evidently derived from an erstwhile necessity. There were also long and low *armarios,* about three and an half feet high (Fig. 21), which one would scarcely know whether to class as *armarios* or very large chests, except that they have doors.

Book cupboards or cabinets were made with considerable variety of appearance, but whether they were plain or ornate, whether they had closed cupboards and drawers in the lower body and shelves in the upper, whether they had but one body and an high base, as in the example of Plate 99, and whether they contained niches for sculpture or were devoted wholly to shelf space, the one common characteristic seems to have been that the books were closed in behind some sort of metal lattice or grille. The example shewn in Plate 99 is one of the more elaborate sort belonging to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The entire cupboard from top to bottom is polychromed and gilt, and its design indicates the complete ascendency of Italian Renaissance architecturalising tendencies; the details, however, with which the various architectural members are embellished are, in every particular, Spanish in conception and technique.

BENCHES

In the matter of benches and settles, Renaissance Spain was most amply provided. They are to be found on every hand and exhibit the widest variations in length, in pattern and in degree of elaboration. They might, indeed, be called one of the most popular articles of furniture during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But the vogue for benches and settles was by no means a new development at the time of the Renaissance. They had been in common use long before and

were made of either walnut or oak during the period when only Gothic design was thought of. The example shewn in Plate 102b, with linenfold panelled back and linenfold panelling on the ends and beneath the seat, is representative of fourteenth and fifteenth century types.

These benches of varied lengths were generally dubbed "monastery benches"; though found chiefly and most abundantly in monasteries and churches, they were to be found in plenty of other places as well. The example shewn in Plate 102a is a good representative of the ordinary type of Renaissance monastery bench. These benches were rather crudely but substantially made of two planks, one for the seat and the other for the low back, which was raked at a convenient angle, and were supported on trestle legs. Oftentimes there was a wrought iron brace attached to the middle of the seat underneath and fastened to the stretchers of the trestle supports at each end. Sometimes the solid backs were quite plain; at other times they were partly carved, as in the example of Plate 102a, or even carved along their whole extent. The earlier benches of this type were generally without arms, although arms occurred occasionally and many of the later specimens had them. In a comparatively few instances there was beneath the seat an apron into which one or more drawers might be let.

Another closely related type of monastery bench had an open back consisting of a fairly broad and more

or less ornately carved toprail supported by two or three staunch backposts. Sometimes these open backs had turned spindles and were arcaded in much the same manner as the backs of the small chairs in Plate 105a.

In a number of cases monastery benches had both backs and seats covered with leather padded and quilted in geometrical patterns, and studded with brass-headed nails; other upholstered benches had the backs and seats covered with velvet (cf. Plate 130a).

There were also oak or walnut settles with broad seats and high backs that were often used beside fireplaces and not seldom served in lieu of bedsteads.

CHESTS

Although Spanish chests had, perhaps, a little less variety of shape and a little less variety in the more usual processes of decoration than were to be found amongst Italian *cassoni* of the Renaissance, they were not less numerous in Spain and they were quite as indispensable to the Spanish household as to the Italian. Furthermore, all during our period they never suffered any considerable decrease in popularity nor went out of fashion as they did in Italy. Even when chests of drawers and other receptacles for the storage of clothing and household goods, more convenient than chests with lifting lids, were popular elsewhere and were perfectly well known in Spain, the majority of people seem to have preferred to use chests, so that even to-day there are said to be many country houses throughout

provincial Spain where any number of chests may be found in constant use, but not one chest of drawers.

Renaissance Spanish chests varied greatly in width, length and height. They were to be found ranging all the way from small coffers to great chests long enough and high enough to serve admirably well in place of *credenze* or sideboards. The great walnut chest with linenfold panels, shewn in Plate 103b, is of perfectly satisfactory dimensions to answer for a sideboard. Many of them were so used and, as a matter of fact, such a piece of furniture as the *credenza* or sideboard was almost unknown in Renaissance Spain.

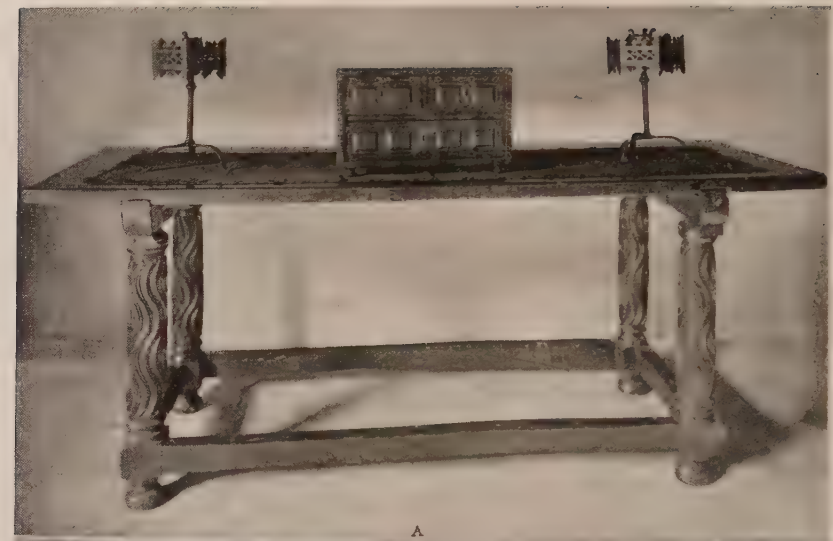
The earliest Spanish chests are either Gothic or *Mudéjar*. The Gothic chests are either carved or painted or, sometimes, both; and they are very often bound with elaborate wrought iron mounts. The *Mudéjar* chests, that is to say the chests that combine both the Christian Spanish and Moorish manner, are generally decorated with bone inlay. Of the *Mudéjar* manner of decoration the chests shewn in Plates 106a and b, and the dome lidded coffer or casket in Plate 105b are excellent examples. In what rich and varied patterns the bone inlay could be applied may be gathered from these instances. The chest shewn in 106a is especially interesting because the contour, with turned feet, moulded base, panels separated by pilasters, frieze, and moulded top forming a cornice, indicates the incoming architectural trend for which the Italian Renaissance influence was largely responsi-

A

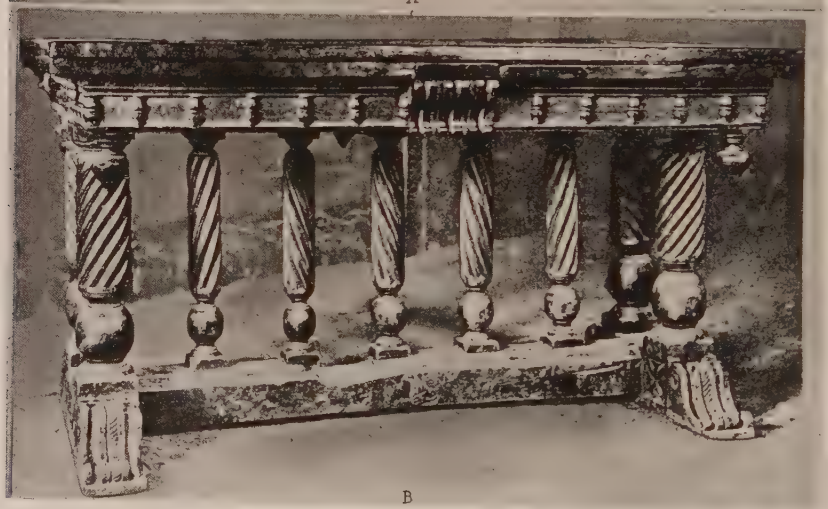
B

A. Sixteenth Century Mudéjar Chest with Geometrical Bone Inlay; Mixed Renaissance and Moorish Influence. B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Mudéjar Chest with Bone Inlay; no Renaissance Architectural Traces

Courtesy of William Helburn, Inc. (from Mueblos Antiguos Españoles)



A



B

A. Sixteenth Century Walnut Table with Spiral Carved Legs
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Draw Table, Spiral-columned and Carved H Base
Courtesy of Arte y Decoracion

A

B

A. Sixteenth Century Long Walnut Table, Carved Drawer Fronts, Turned Legs and H Stretcher. B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Table, Carved Drawers, Turned Legs and H Stretcher

Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

A

B

A. Sixteenth Century Three-cornered Walnut Table, Turned Legs, Carved Apron and Flared Moulding at Base of Underframing
B. Small Sixteenth Century Walnut Table with Drawers, Turned Legs, Carved Runner Feet and Arcaded Stretcher
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

ble, while the manner of inlaid decoration and the geometrical *motifs* are purely Moorish. By way of sharp contrast, the chest in 106b is altogether without trace of architectural element and is merely a rectangular box sitting flat on the ground.

Many old Spanish chests, but especially the *Mudéjar* chests, have the underside of the lid as richly decorated as the top. Furthermore, there was often an inner lid which served as a cover while the outside lid stood raised to display its inside decorations (Plate 105a). In the *Mudéjar* chests these inside decorations are in bone inlay; in the others they are painted (Plate 105a) or carved. Spanish chests commonly had flat lids (Plates 103, 105a and 106) or else arched lids (Plate 104b). Domed and other elaborately shaped or "raised" lids were more apt to occur on small coffers and caskets (Plate 105b).

Not a few old Spanish chests were covered with leather or fabric. Chests covered in this way were generally trunk-shaped with round-arched lids (Plate 104b) and, in addition, were frequently placed on stands which raised them several inches above the floor (*cf.* the seventeenth century trunk-chest in Plate 126b with attached scroll feet). Leather and fabric-covered trunk-chests were often further decorated with brass-headed nail studdings. Crimson damask or velvet was the favourite fabric covering, but green and blue likewise occur at times. The leather covered trunk-chests are more commonly found in Andalusia than elsewhere.

Although chests of many kinds and of rich workmanship were made in all parts of Spain, the provinces of Viscaya and Asturias in the north, and Catalonia in the northeast, seem to have produced the finest examples. The Asturian chest was characteristically raised some inches above the ground upon feet which were really the corner stiles lengthened below the body. Furthermore the old Asturian chest frequently had an apron, shaped at its lower edge (Plate 103a) extending nearly all the way to the ground and often concealing or almost concealing the legs or feet. These aprons were apt to be richly carved (Plate 103a) with a pattern in conformity with the design of the carving on the body of the chest.

Spanish Renaissance chests, particularly those made in the Asturias, are often carved over their entire surface with small geometrical patterns (Plate 103a); others are carved all over in vigorous relief with freer patterns including foliage, arabesques and figures. Chests of this sort, in addition to the carving, usually have some elaboration of mouldings at the base and top. The chests of this description are more characteristic of Catalonia than elsewhere, although they are not confined to that province by any means.

TABLES

Very early Spanish tables for dining purposes seem often to have been long boards laid on trestles or, occasionally, planks upheld by a central post or pier with

outspreading feet. The majority of old Spanish tables now to be found were originally monastery tables. These tables are almost invariably made of walnut—although other materials are not unknown—and are quite remarkable for the quality of the wood and for the width and thickness of the planks forming the tops. They are also remarkable for their sturdy structure.

Renaissance tables were generally upheld either by turned or carved legs, or else by splayed trestle supports of approximately lyre shape (*v.* seventeenth century types shewn in Plates 121a and b). These splayed lyre-shaped trestle supports usually, though not invariably, had wrought iron braces (*cf.* seventeenth century tables in Plate 121a and Plate 122a and b) attached to the cross stretchers of the splayed trestles and connected with the underside of the table top. Very often the wrought iron braces were an important item of decoration (Plate 122b). The straight legs, turned or carved (Plates 107 and 108), were connected by stretchers.

The quality of the table tops—already alluded to—may better be appreciated if some measurements are quoted. The tops of large tables were sometimes as much as sixteen to eighteen feet long and, time and again, were made from one splendid single plank. Some of these planks are almost, if not quite, four feet wide. Though not invariably so massive and heavy, tops were very frequently two and an half to three inches thick. These tops were cut off straight with

plain, square edges; they were neither moulded nor carved. A carved or moulded edge around the top of a Spanish Renaissance table would be sufficient cause to question its authenticity. Carving the edges is often a pet trick of the fakirs.

Consistent with the tradition of their descent from tables that were only loose planks laid on movable trestles, early Spanish Renaissance tables had no underframing to uphold the top (Plate 107a) and hence no drawers. Both the tables with straight legs and the tables with pairs of splayed trestle legs (*cf.* Plate 121a) had the tops attached to the pairs of legs at each end in a thoroughly distinctive manner peculiar to Spanish structure. Dovetail or fan-shaped grooves were cut transversely across the underside of the thick walnut top at each end; into these grooves, which varied in the depth of their cutting with the thickness of the top, fitted cross-pieces or billets were driven to which the legs were attached either with hinges or by means of mortising and tenoning. In many cases these cross-pieces were made in upper and lower lengths held together by turn-bolts; the upper length was fast in the groove in the underside of the top; to the lower length the legs were fastened. By this device the tops could readily be detached from the legs at will if it was necessary to move or transport the tables.

The table shewn in Plate 107a has not one of the very thick tops but the manner of the grooving may readily be seen. The waved carving of the round legs,

the heavy stretchers housed in square blocks, and the turned feet are characteristic of early Spanish Renaissance manner.

Draw-tables, though not especially numerous, also appeared at an early date (Plate 107b) and were upheld by an H-shaped system of legs with pairs of legs at the ends, resting on a massive base connected by a single stretcher upholding smaller legs supporting the middle of the table (*cf.* Ligurian table, Plate 22b). The principle of the draw-table, of course, required an underframing to uphold the top. Italian Renaissance influence is perceptible in this example, but the spirally fluted or grooved legs are rather characteristically Spanish.

The tables with underframing and drawers (Plates 108a and b) are of a somewhat later type of construction, but these, too, very often have the transverse pieces dovetailed into the underside of the top (Plate 108b). The legs were either turned or carved and the stretchers were either of single length running H-wise between the two shorter end stretchers (Plates 108a and b) or arranged upon all four sides without any recessing, as in Plate 107a.

Even when the apron or underframing and the drawer-fronts were intricately carved, the edges of the top remained quite unornamented (Plates 108 and 109). The low relief carving of geometrical foliage patterns and the gouge carving surrounding the drawer-fronts and along the bottom rail of the underframing are

typically Spanish both in *motif* and in the manner of distribution (Plate 108a). Typically Spanish also are the technique and the fashion of foliated scrolls, as well as the carved brackets, of the underframing and drawer-fronts of the table in Plate 108b.

The smaller Spanish Renaissance tables and stands were just as stoutly made and, very often, just as richly carved as the larger tables. The little three-cornered table (Plate 109a) is a good example not only of this sturdiness but also of the manner of the later Renaissance decoration. The top is characteristic in its thickness and in its absolute lack of carving or moulding. The carving of the apron is typical in its rich modelling, and another feature essentially Spanish is the projecting flare of the heavy moulding at the bottom of the underframing.

Another type of small table or stand appears in Plate 109b. The use of the arcaded stretcher, shaped on its underside, between the two front legs is altogether Spanish. Although the distinctly architectural character of the legs indicates the effect of Italian Renaissance principles gradually absorbed in Spain, the lozenge pattern and small panel divisions of the drawer-front point to a strong remaining Moorish tradition.

CHAIRS

In all likelihood, the oldest type of Spanish chair of which there are any remaining examples was the X or scissors-type of folding chair which finds its counter-

A

B

C

D

A. Late Sixteenth Century Walnut Armchair, Suspended Leather Seat, Arcaded Back and Runner Feet. B. Sixteenth Century Walnut Armchair, Broad Decorated Front Stretcher, Turned Arm-posts, Rectangular Seat and Back, Upholstered
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

C. Sixteenth Century Walnut Armchair, Hung Leather Seat, Broad Front Stretcher, Carved and Fretted, Stitched and Brass-studded Leather Back
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

D. Sixteenth Century Walnut and Beech "Scissors" Chairs
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A. Late Renaissance Walnut Armchair, Portuguese Type, Stamped Leather Seat and Back Studded with Brass-headed Nails, Shaped Back, Turned Legs and Armposts, Scrolled and Carved Front Stretcher. B. Late Renaissance Chair, Portuguese Type, "Spanish Scroll" Feet, Shaped Back. C. Late Renaissance Chair, Portuguese Type, Stamped Leather Seat and Straight-topped Rectangular Back, Brass-studded; Turned Legs, Stretchers, Feet and Backposts
Courtesy of Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

D. Late Renaissance "Scissors" Chair, Carved Walnut
Courtesy of Arte y Decoracion

part in the Italian *sedia del campo,* more commonly known under the names of *sedia Dantesca* and *sedia Savonarola.* Chairs of this sort, we are told, were the Moors' seats of honour, in the first place, and were adopted by the Spaniards along with the rest of the Moorish legacy. Notwithstanding the early date at which these X or scissors chairs were used in Italy, they seem to have originated in Spain, and about the time their popularity was becoming well established in Italy they were gradually falling into disuse in Spain.

Two of these Spanish X chairs, though not the earliest examples (Plate 110d), are of the Renaissance period and serve sufficiently both to indicate the type and to shew the resemblance with the Italian seats of like character. The chair corresponding to the Italian "*sedia Dantesca*" is made of walnut with carved toes at the ends of the runner feet. The seat consists of a piece of leather over which is stretched a piece of velvet or upon which is laid a flat velvet cushion. The backs were often of leather, used for strength, over which was stretched the more elegant velvet cover. Although these chairs were often carved to some slight extent, it was more in accordance with Spanish and Moorish usage to depend upon geometrical inlaid patterns for the sole decoration.

The small chair, corresponding to the "*sedia Savonarola,*" though sometimes embellished with geometrical inlay, was more commonly without decoration of any sort and was usually made of other woods than walnut.

For its distinction it depended upon the rich cushions placed upon its seat or the fabrics thrown over it.

Akin to these two forms was another sort of X chair (Plate 111d) which was sometimes made of walnut and richly carved. Over the leather seat, fastened to the "horns" was laid the rich velvet or brocade cushion. The example illustrated is one of the more elaborate specimens; the chair was more often plain or embellished with inlay.

The seat associated in most peoples' minds with the Spanish Renaissance is the walnut armchair or *frailero,* with rectangular seat and back of leather or velvet, and a contour closely resembling the "Mission" armchairs so abundantly and cheaply manufactured and distributed over the whole of America. The fundamental difference, of course, is that the old Spanish *frailero* was a distinguished and elegant seat while the commercial "Mission" armchair, its degenerate descendant, is a clumsy thing without any grace or distinction whatever.

The *frailero* (Plate 110c) or so-called "monk's chair" was a type perfectly familiar to and in common use by the monks who established the Mexican and Californian missions. With what resources they had they made rude chairs of a similar type, and these Mexican and Californian chairs were the direct progenitors of the modern " Mission " chairs, hence the name.

These walnut armchairs had leather seats stretched

from the side seatrails—there were at first no front and back seatrails—and fastened with hand-wrought, large-headed iron or brass nails (Plates 110a and 110c). The leather backs were stretched from backpost to backpost and fastened in the same way (Plate 110c). The rich-toned leather of these seats and backs was often tooled with intricate geometrical figures. In many cases plain, untooled leather was stitched with lines to form a decoration of simple character (Plate 110c). The backs of these chairs were rarely as high as the backs of the corresponding type of Italian chairs (*cf.* Plates 25a and b) and the seats were generally somewhat lower. Another distinguishing point of difference was that the broad front stretcher of the Spanish Renaissance chairs was generally the object of considerable carved or fretted and moulded decoration (Plates 110a and b, and 110c) while the earlier Italian chairs of corresponding appearance (Plates 25a and b) had no broad stretcher between the front legs, although the Italian chairs of slightly later date often had these wide front stretchers which bore more or less ornamentation. Italian armchairs with this feature, however, were generally more or less reflections of Spanish influence. The broad decorated front stretcher was a distinctly Spanish characteristic.

A number of the arms of these Spanish Renaissance armchairs were perfectly straight (Plate 110b) and were frequently very broad. Other arms, again, were shaped like those of Plate 110a and Plate 110c. A

slightly later form than the stretched leather back was the arcaded wooden back like that of Plate 110a. Another slightly later Renaissance development was the chair with upholstered seat built on a regular frame formed of the usual four seatrails—back, front and sides (Plate 110b). Chairs of this sort also often had turned armposts, and sometimes both armposts and front legs displayed considerable carved decoration. Oftentimes there were no finials on the backposts (Plate 110c), at other times the finials were either turned (Plate 110a) or carved (Plate 110b). Again, the finials might be of moulded brass.

Another sort of later Renaissance chair used in Spain was what was known as the "Portuguese type" (Plates 111a, b and c). Chairs of this description had richly tooled leather backs and seats, and both seats and backs were fastened to the framework with large brass-headed nails. The backs were often shaped or arched (Plates 111a and b) both top and bottom and the tops had either two or three pointed brass finials. The legs and stretchers were turned and there was an elaborately carved and arched or "rising" front stretcher. The feet were sometimes turned (Plates 111a and c), sometimes carved in a manner known as the "Spanish scroll" (Plate 111b). This "Portuguese type" of chair, so called because its origin is attributed to Portugal, often had plain rectangular backs (Plate 111c) instead of the arched and shaped variety.

Another type of later Renaissance side chair had a

wooden seat with an open arcaded back (Plate 105a). Oftentimes there was an arcaded front stretcher as well (Plate 128a) and the ornamentation usually consisted of gouge carving (Plate 128a). Although the two chairs in Plate 128a really belong to the early seventeenth century, the type was more or less common to both sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Sometimes the backs of chairs of this sort were not arcaded but merely had turned spindles between a cross rail and the toprail like the left-hand chair in Plate 128a.

The better chairs of this sort were made of walnut. There were also a great many made of pine and beech rudely resembling the more carefully made walnut chairs. These cruder chairs generally had corded seats or rushed seats. In Mallorca especially, but elsewhere also, the corded seats were often executed in rather intricate patterns with great ingenuity.

THE BAROQUE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

SPANISH SEVENTEENTH CENTURY BACKGROUNDS

THERE was a more perceptible difference between Spanish Renaissance furniture and Spanish furniture of the Baroque seventeenth century than there was between Spanish Renaissance backgrounds and Spanish seventeenth century backgrounds. This condition can be readily understood when we take into account the strong Spanish sense of conservatism, aversion to drastic change, and the fact that furniture has always been more quickly sensitive to changes of fashion than have the more important features of fixed decoration.

We may, then, consider the composition of the fixed background in the seventeenth century as substantially the same with the fixed background of the later Renaissance. Nevertheless, there were certain tendencies that characterised the seventeenth century and these tendencies became more and more pronounced as the century advanced, finally differentiating the quality of the backgrounds from those of an earlier period. These tendencies are probably to be ascribed to the general spirit of the age, aided by political and commercial contacts, which found expression in kindred forms in other countries at the same time.

Two of the most notable of these tendencies were the universal taste for gorgeousness and display and the taste for larger scale and vigorously curving lines. The latter taste found expression in a general preference for bolder and larger patterns in decorative matters and also in architectural details of heavier scale with boldly sweeping and symmetrically arranged curves.

The taste for gorgeousness we find evidenced by a more general use of intricate carving for doors, doorways, shutters and ceilings and by a far more frequent employment of colour and gilding to enhance their effect. The architectural treatment of fireplaces likewise echoed the same tendency. Tile patterns were larger, often required more than four tile units to complete the design, in many cases were more brilliantly polychromed, and frequently displayed human figures, animals and sundry naturalistic *motifs* with less and less emphasis on the geometrical and highly conventionalised *motifs* prevalent at an earlier era. Wall hangings displayed bolder and more dominating devices in embroidered and *appliqué* work; large pictures, both portraits and religious and historical paintings, occupied a more prominent place in decorative schemes; and there were more sumptuous and more numerous accessories such as the porcelains and other objects of luxury that had come in through Portuguese trade with the East, large mirrors, and splendid sconces, candelabra and chandeliers.

FURNITURE

ARTICLES OF FURNITURE IN USE

The articles of furniture in common use remained practically the same as in the preceding era. It should be noted, however, that that most Spanish of all pieces of Spanish cabinetwork, the *vargueño* cabinet, in large measure changed its pristine aspect and assumed new guises, as we shall see.

DECORATIVE PROCESSES

The same decorative processes continued to be employed as we have seen in evidence in the preceding epoch, except that the use of geometrical bone or ivory inlay was almost wholly discontinued and more extended use was made of painting and gilding.

TYPES OF DECORATION

The old geometrical patterns so freely employed at the beginning of the Renaissance era, and employed with such amazingly rich effect, fell gradually into abeyance. Their place was gradually taken by more recently adopted Classic *motifs*, devices popular in Italy during the later Renaissance, and various subjects that found their way through commerce or divers other means into Spanish acceptance.

MATERIALS

There was no significant change in the materials of which Spanish furniture was made except in the introduction of divers woods brought from Spain's colonies

PLATE 112

A

B

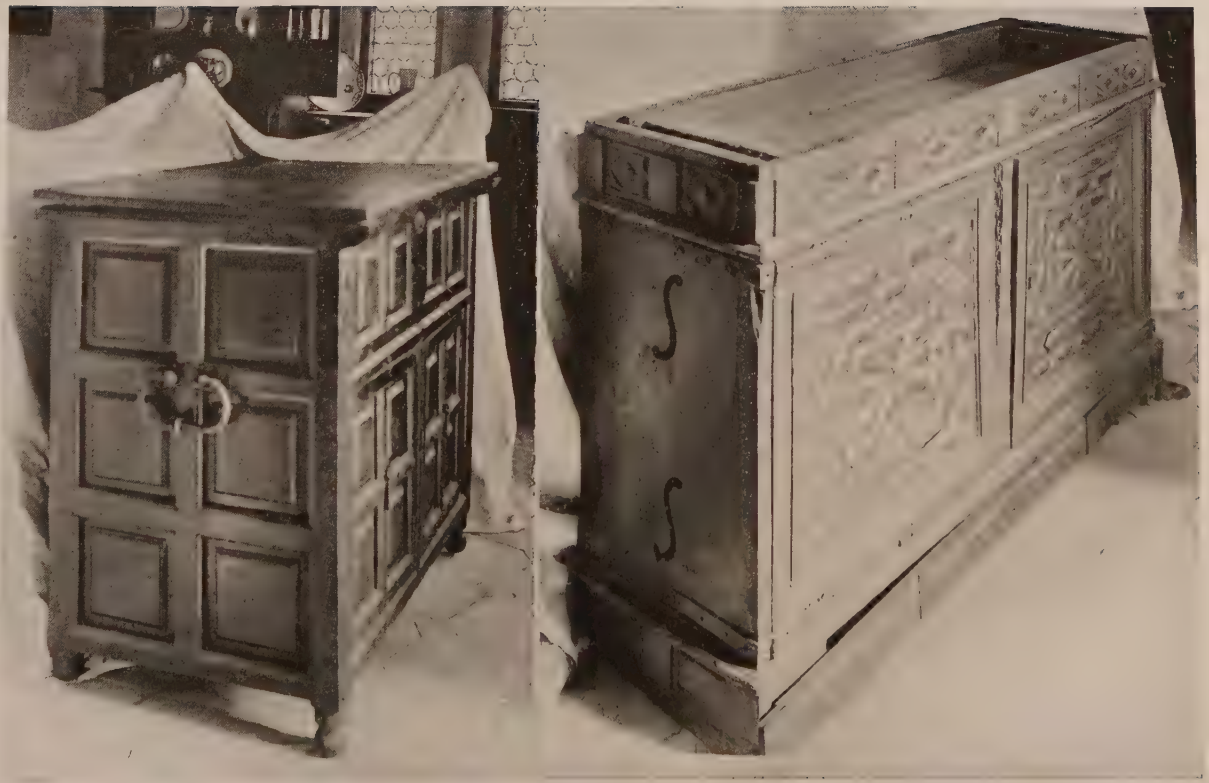
A. Seventeenth Century Polychromed Cabinet with Small Panelled Landscapes; on Walnut Stand with Spiral-turned Legs
B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Cabinet and Stand, Engraved Bone Inlay Decoration
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Two-bodied Walnut *Armario* or Cupboard with Open Spindled Upper Doors. B. Seventeenth Century Three-bodied Walnut *Armario* or Cupboard, Falling Front in Middle Portion, Upper Doors Open and Spindled
Courtesy of William Helburn, Inc. (from Muebles Antiguos Españoles)

Seventeenth Century North Spanish Oak *Armario* or Wardrobe of Two Bodies; Fluted Stiles and Geometrical Carved Ornament Typical of Period
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City



A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Cabinet or High Chest with Doors and Rectangular Panelling. B. Seventeenth Century Walnut *Armario* or Cabinet Base with "Jewelled" or Cabochon Carving
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A. Seventeenth Century North Spanish Oak Low Cabinet with Doors and Drawers; Runner Feet. Seventeenth Century Painted and Gilt Bookshelves; Intended to Hang on Wall or Stand on Another Piece of Furniture, as Here

B. Seventeenth Century Oak Corner Cupboard of Two Bodies, from Basque Provinces
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Low Cupboard or Hutch with Boot Feet, Upper Panels Latticed
B. Seventeenth Century Small Round Folding Gate Table
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

Late Seventeenth Century Walnut Veneered and Inlaid Falling-front Cabinet on Stand with Spiral-turned Legs and Bun Feet; Dutch Influence
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Secretary with Turned Legs and Plain Stretchers; Inlaid Decoration
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Falling-front Writing Cabinet, Cupboard Base and Central Lion Feet

in the New World. Mahogany was the most important of these. Notwithstanding the introduction of mahogany, rosewood and other materials of the sort, the majority of Spanish furniture continued, as previously, to be made of walnut, and after walnut, of oak, chestnut and pine.

CABINETS

The cabinets of the seventeenth century were distinctly more architectural in conception than those of the Renaissance era, at least so far as their stands were concerned and the treatment of the decorative details and other minor items in the cabinets themselves.

The two cabinets shewn in Plate 112 are plainly derived in their general arrangement from the old *vargueño* cabinet but, apart from this characteristic, their whole execution is totally different and exhibits little trace of the ancient Moorish influence which contributed such an important element to the quality of the earlier cabinetwork. The stand of 112a shews the characteristic spiral-turned legs of seventeenth century tables and discloses contemporary architectural qualities hitherto unknown. The stand of 112b has the square tapered legs of Flemish provenance and displays an wholly new feature in the solid base with drawers, the whole scheme being obviously borrowed from northern models. The small-panelled drawer-fronts of 112a, banded with tortoiseshell inlay surrounding painted figures, scenes and architectural subjects, exemplify both the exuberant taste of the period

and an altogether new method of polychrome enrichment for small surfaces. The cabinet proper of 112b retains the old *vargueño* exterior form, even to the

Fig. 22.—A. Seventeenth Century Two-bodied Cabinet with Shaped-panel Ornament. B. Seventeenth Century Chest with Lozenge Pattern and Gouge Carving Decoration

handles on the ends and the total absence of all mouldings, but the divisions of the interior and the engraved bone inlay wrought in distinctly Classic *motifs* plainly declares new taste and new methods.

The two-bodied cupboard or cabinet with open

spindled doors above and doors and drawers below (Plate 113a) has a certain simple architectural quality, besides which it was evidently devised for somewhat more complex social requirements than its relatives of the preceding century, and yet its runner feet are distinctly archaic and indicative of the Spanish tendency to hold on to old methods. Cupboards like this, with simple incised carving in a rich arabesque pattern, were more apt to be found in country house and provincial places rather than in the dwellings of the more important sort. The decoration of tall cabinets often consisted of elaborately shaped panelling (Fig. 22a).

The three-bodied cabinet in Plate 113b is really a piece of writing furniture combined with cupboards above and below. The central portion, which has a falling front to let down, is evidently derived from the old *vargueño;* the cupboards above and below are seventeenth century conceptions; and the pediment on top reflects the strongly developed architectural tendency of the age amongst cabinetmakers.

The carved walnut *armario* or wardrobe shewn in Plate 114 is eloquent of contemporary architectural tendencies both in its general contour and in the distribution of its carved decoration. It retains many of the old distinctively Spanish *motifs,* such as the "miller's wheel," which seems to be of Coptic origin, but its whole design is indicative of seventeenth century manner and the arrangement of its short cupboard above and long cupboard beneath might well be

attributed to Flemish influence. Such pieces as this are to be attributed more to the northern provinces than elsewhere.

The two walnut cabinets in Plate 115 are of that nondescript nature, between hutch, chest and *credenza,*

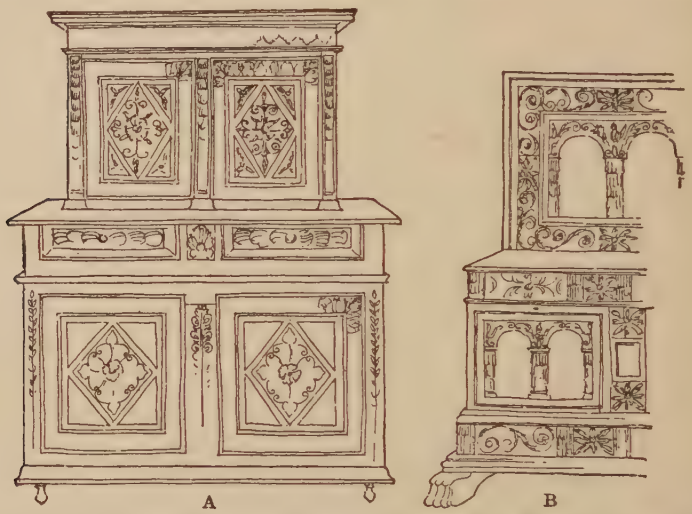


FIG. 23.—A. Seventeenth Century Two-bodied Cabinet with Receding Upper Body. B. Seventeenth Century Chest with Carved Inner Lid

that relieved the Spaniards of ever feeling the want of such a piece of furniture as either the sideboard or *credenza.* The simple panelling of the cabinet in Plate 115a is characteristic of the plainer sort of seventeenth century Spanish furniture. The complex cabochon raised panelling of the cabinet in Plate 115b—from which the top is missing and which closely resembles a sideboard or *credenza* in its scheme of structure—points to a lingering Moorish influence cropping out from time to time in matters of design.

The low cabinet, with doors and drawers (Plate 116a) and the two-bodied corner cupboard (Plate 116b) are of oak and come from the Basque provinces. The painted and gilt set of shelves standing on the low cabinet is a separate piece of furniture and was intended either to hang upon the wall or to stand, as here, upon some other piece of furniture. The fine fluting on the upper part of the corner stiles of the low cabinet is typical of seventeenth century northern Spanish decoration. In a number of the seventeenth century two-bodied cabinets, the upper body was stepped back (Fig. 23a).

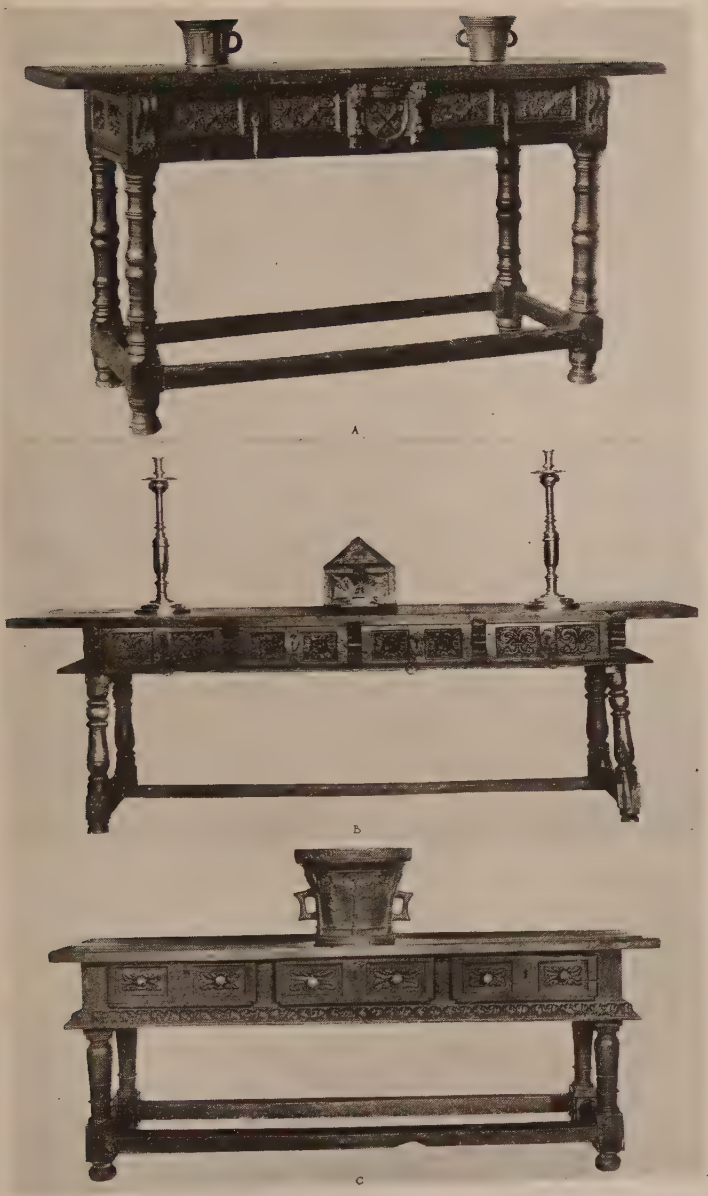
One of the most interesting pieces of mixed ancestry, which could occur scarcely anywhere else than in Spain, is the low hutch on legs, shewn in Plate 117a. The panelling is typical of seventeenth century form, both in Spain and in Italy; the latticed upper panels of the doors are of purely Moorish derivation. The booted feet are a peculiarity occasionally found in Spain. It will be noticed that the top has the transverse pieces driven into dovetail grooves, in the manner of the early tables; on the other hand, there is a sharp departure from old Spanish precedent in the moulded edge of the top, a feature that never occurred until a comparatively late date.

WRITING FURNITURE

Writing furniture was both more numerous and varied in form in the seventeenth century than in the sixteenth. Some of the forms were closely akin to the

ancient *vargueño;* others displayed a considerable divergence from the primal type. The falling-front writing cabinet shewn in Plate 118 is so thoroughly Dutch in appearance, or so thoroughly like English writing cabinets of the reign of William and Mary, that it is hard to realise that it is a piece of Spanish origin and representative of a fairly numerous family. There is nothing about it that strikes one as being typically Spanish; even in the legs and stand one looks in vain for a distinctively Spanish touch. The *vargueño* principle is back of it, to be sure, but the decoration of inlay upon oyster shell veneer is Dutch, and pieces such as this must be attributed to Spanish intercourse with the Netherlands. Its fashion, of course, belongs to the very late seventeenth century. The walnut falling-front secretary, shewn in Plate 119b, exhibits a much closer relationship to its *vargueño* progenitor in every way, although its speech is the speech of the mid-seventeenth century. In the details of ornament Spanish conservatism may easily be traced.

The table secretary, with a range of drawers at the back (Plate 119a), is a far more radical departure from the *vargueño* type than the "Dutch" secretary of Plate 118, and yet it is more characteristically Spanish in every particular of structure and decoration, from the turned legs and robust stretchers to the small rack of drawers and the inlaid banding around the drawers, a decoration admirably effective on the dark walnut.



A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Table, Turned Legs, Plain Stretchers, Typically Carved Drawer Fronts and Acanthus Brackets. B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Table, Turned Legs, H Stretcher, Carved Drawer Fronts. C. Seventeenth Century Walnut Table with Characteristic Flared Moulding at Base of Underframing

Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Table with Lyre-scrolled Trestle Legs and Wrought Iron Brace; Inlaid Top

B. Seventeenth Century Carved Walnut Table, Lyre-scrolled Trestle Legs, no Stretcher nor Brace

C. Seventeenth Century Carved Walnut Table, Turned Legs, no Lengthwise Stretcher, Acanthus Brackets on Underframing

Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

PLATE 122

A B

A. Seventeenth Century Small Walnut Table with Drawers, Splayed Trestle Supports with Turned Legs, Iron Braces. B. Seventeenth Century Small Walnut Table, Splayed Trestles with Typically Turned Legs, Typical Wrought Iron Braces
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Table with Panelled Drawer Fronts, Square Legs and Stretchers, and Short Baluster-turned Legs Supported by Longitudinal Stretchers. B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Small Table or Stand with Deep Drawers, Moulded Stretchers and Ionic Columnar Legs
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

PLATE 124

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut High-post Bedstead, Spiral-turned Posts and Spindles at Bed-head; Portuguese Type

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Painted and Gilt Bedstead, Fluted Posts, Spindled and Pedimented Head with Shield
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Seventeenth Century Polychromed and Gilt Bedstead, Baluster-turned Half-length Posts and Shaped Headboard

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Marriage Chest, Incised Carving, Scrolled Feet and Shaped Apron
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Seventeenth Century Chest Covered with Green Velvet, Brass-Studded; on Gilt Stand with Canted Scroll Feet

A

B

C

A. Seventeenth Century Basque Gate Table, Turned Legs, Oval Top with Drop Leaves and Painted Decoration. B. Detail of Painted Decoration on Another Basque Table Top. C. Seventeenth Century Walnut Armchair, Spiral-turned Legs, Stretchers and Armposts, Shaped and Grooved Arms, and Typically Shaped Back

Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

TABLES

Spanish tables of the seventeenth century faithfully perpetuated many of the characteristics that distinguished their predecessors of the sixteenth. There were both the straight-legged tables, with various arrangements of stretchers (Plates 120, 121c and 123) and the tables with splayed lyre-trestle supports (Plates 121a and b), both with and without the wrought iron brace. There were also tables with splayed turned legs, arranged as trestle supports and connected by wrought iron braces (Plate 122).

There were also tables with drawers in the underframing (Plates 120, 121b and c and Plate 123)—the top with drawers being a somewhat later feature than the top without drawers—and tables without drawers (Plates 117b, 121a and 122b). The turned legs of 117b, 120a and b, 121c, and 122b are all characteristically Spanish in their shaping, inasmuch as their multiple divisions are quite different from the usual pear-shaped baluster turning of Italian tables of the same date.

The rich elaboration of the carving too (Plates 120 and 121) is characteristically Spanish and quite different from Italian carving in appearance and technique. Another feature typically Spanish is to be found in the outward flared moulding at the bottom of the underframing (Plates 120b and c and 123a). Some of these tables, too, it will be seen, still have the transverse pieces driven into the dovetail grooves in the underside of the top. Moulding of the edge, too, appears as a

seventeenth century occasional incident (Plates 121a, 122b and 123b).

The table in Plate 123a displays other features peculiarly Spanish—the heavy square legs with turned feet, and the turned middle legs upheld by the stretcher.

Little round-topped gate tables, such as that in Plate 117b, were quite frequent throughout Spain, but large round or oval gate tables with painted tops (Plate 127a and b) were peculiar to the Basque provinces.

BEDSTEADS

Typical seventeenth century Spanish bedsteads were of several sorts. There were bedsteads like that shewn in Plate 124a with spiral-turned high posts, spiral-turned balustrade at the head and a tester surmounted by four turned finials. Bedsteads of this sort were really of Portuguese type, as were also those of the sort indicated by Plate 124b, with turned posts and baluster-turned headboard with cresting.

A more distinctively Spanish type appears in Plate 125a, a ponderous type of structure with four square fluted posts, surmounted by balls and spikes, and a balustered headboard with pediment cresting and, perhaps, armorial bearings. Such bedsteads were often painted and gilt.

There was also the type shewn in Plate 125b with four turned posts and a detachable headboard—sometimes fastened against the wall—elaborately shaped and gaily polychromed and gilt. Bedsteads of this

type were usually the vehicles of intricate coloured decoration.

CHESTS

The chest, as previously stated, maintained its popularity in Spain throughout the period under our consideration. The old types continued in favour and, more or less, continued to be made. Newer types, however, indicative of the tastes of the age, were made at the same time. The trunk-chests of this date, like their predecessors, were covered with splendid velvets and brocades, as well as fine leather, and were abundantly studded with brass-headed nails. The stands, however, of this date were apt to exhibit robust scrolled feet, perhaps gilded, like those of the trunk-chest covered with rich green velvet, shewn in Plate 126b.

The little marriage chest, with incised carving and the bride's name, shewn in Plate 126a, indicates its comparatively late origin by the scrolled feet and the scalloped apron around the bottom.

Not a few seventeenth century chests continued to shew surviving Moorish tradition in the small divisions of their geometrical carving (Fig. 24a and b).

CHAIRS

The earlier seventeenth century Spanish chairs in great measure followed pretty closely the precedents of style furnished by the chairs of the sixteenth century. About the middle of the century, however, we find the type of chair shewn in Plate 127c quite characteristic

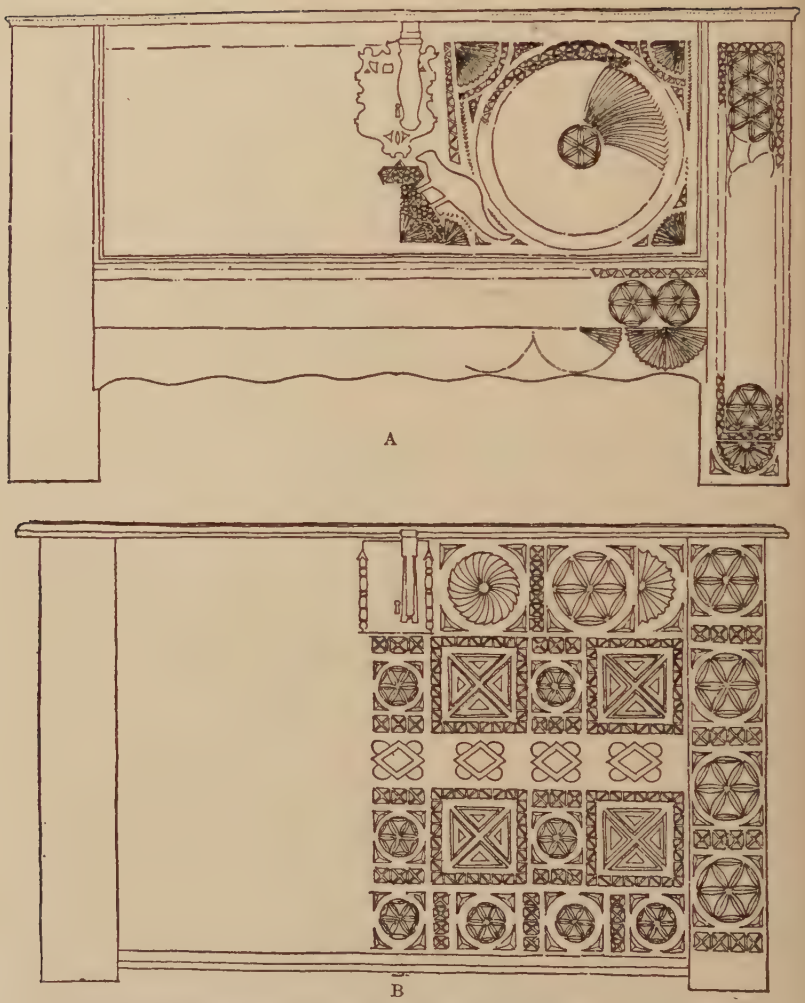


Fig. 24.—A. Seventeenth Century Chest with Characteristic Geometrical Carving. B. Seventeenth Century Chest with Geometrical Ornament in Small Divisions in Old Moorish Manner

A. Seventeenth Century Walnut Chairs, Gouge-carved, Spindled Backs and Spindled Front Stretchers
B. Seventeenth Century Walnut Stools
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A. Early Eighteenth Century Painted Beechwood Chair, Red and Gold Embossed Leather Seat and Back. B. Late Seventeenth Century Carved Walnut Chair, Polychrome and Gilt Leather Seat and Back
Courtesy of Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, Philadelphia

C. Late Seventeenth Century Walnut Caned Armchair, Spooned Back, Broad Central Splat, Carved Cresting. D. Late Seventeenth Century Red Lacquer Caned Chair, "Spanish Scroll" Feet, Carved Cresting
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A

B

A. Seventeenth Century Monastery Bench Covered with Quilted Leather, Lyre-scroll Trestles, Iron Braces

B. Seventeenth Century Carved Walnut Bench with Arms, Spindled Back and Broad Carved Toprail

Courtesy of Arte y Decoracion

A. Seventeenth Century Oak Settle with Panelled Back
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

B. Late Eighteenth Century Spanish Colonial Mahogany Bench
Courtesy of Wanamaker Stores, New York City

of the era. Spiral-turned legs, an abundance of spiral-turned stretchers, spiral-turned armposts, and heavy, shaped flaring arms deeply grooved all played up to the most conspicuous and distinctive feature, the high back with flared and shaped top. Chairs of this sort were covered either with rich-toned leather or with gorgeous velvets and brocades.

The wooden-seated chairs, with open arcaded or spindled backs and gouge carving (Plate 128a), have already been discussed in an earlier section. They belonged to both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (Cf. also Fig. 25c and d, likewise Fig. 26b and c).

The end of the century saw a much richer variety of chairs. There were caned armchairs with cabriole legs —a feature communicated by Portuguese contact and ultimately derived by the Portuguese from the East— such as that in Plate 129c, with a solid central splat between two panels of fine caning, and an elaborately shaped cresting. These chairs often had a shaped apron under the seat. There were also red lacquered chairs, with caned seats and backs, carved cresting on the toprail and an elaborately carved stretcher between turned front legs terminating in Spanish scrolled feet (Plate 129d). The connexion between chairs of both the foregoing types and late seventeenth century chairs in England is easily seen.

There were also chairs covered with tooled and polychromed and gilt leather (Plate 129b) with richly carved and elaborately shaped cresting, incipient cabri-

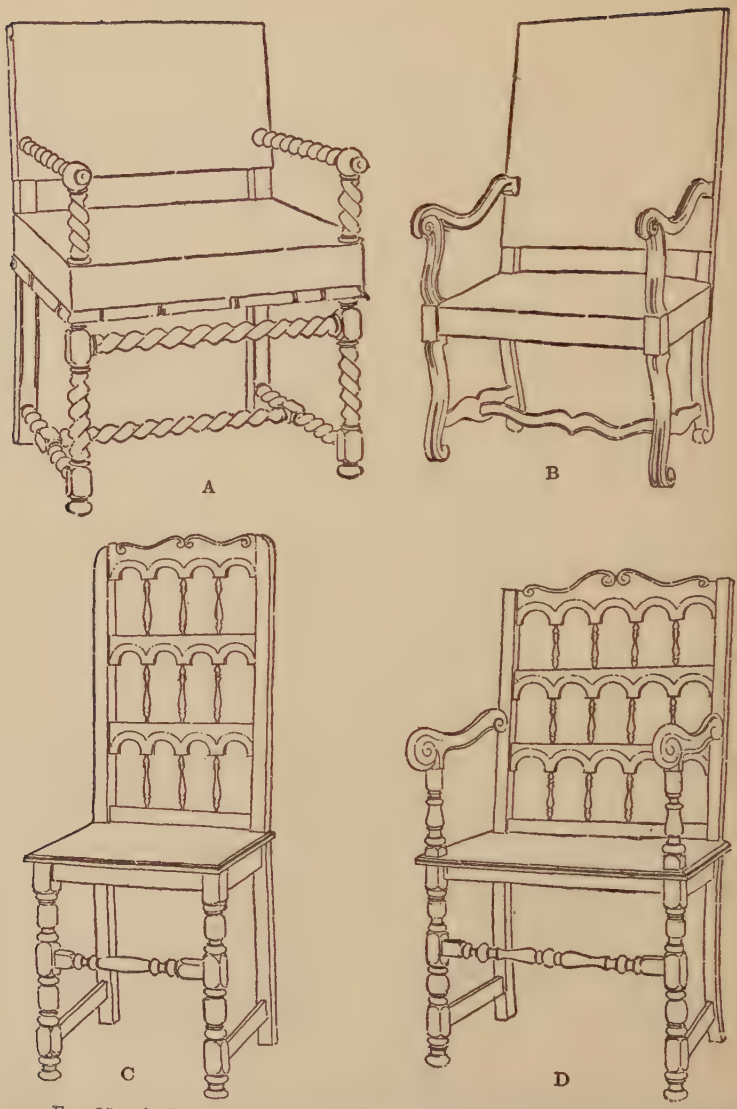


Fig. 25.—A. Seventeenth Century Spiral Turned Armchair. B. Seventeenth Century Armchair with Scrolled Arms and Legs in the French Manner of Louis XIII. C and D. Seventeenth Century Turned Chairs with Arcaded Backs

ole legs and intricately carved front stretcher. Akin to chairs of this kind were chairs such as that shewn in Plate 129a, with a shield-shaped back, shaped and

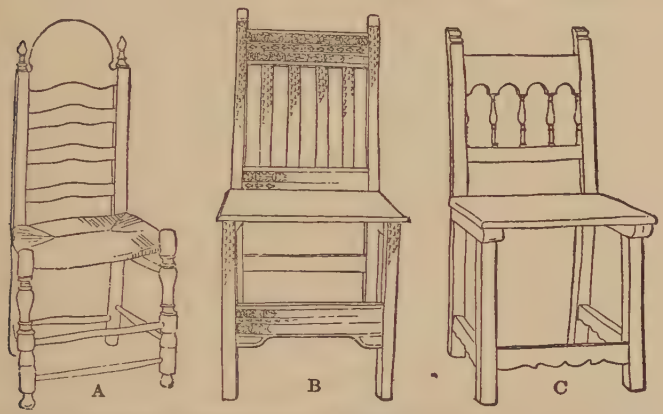


Fig. 26.—A. Seventeenth Century Turned Ladder-back Chair. B. Seventeenth Century Gouge-carved Chair. C. Seventeenth Century Arcaded-back Chair

carved toprail, shaped and carved seatrail, cabriole front legs, turned back legs, rising, recessed stretcher,

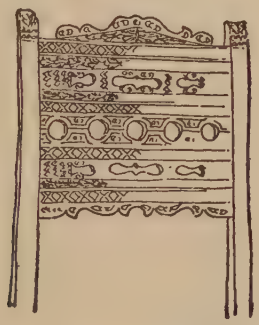


Fig. 27.—Detail of Gouge Carving on Back of Seventeenth Century Chair

and upholstery of tooled and gilded leather. This chair is made of beech wood and painted.

It is impossible to illustrate all the various sub-

types of chairs used in Spain at the end of the seventeenth century but the examples illustrated will serve to shew the general trend of fashion and the bent of local peculiarities. As a matter of actual fact, whatever types of chairs were found in England at this period were pretty sure to have their analogues in closely re-

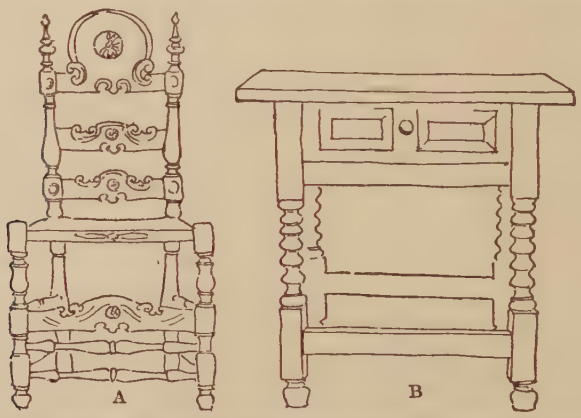


FIG. 28.—A. Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Type of Turned, Painted and Gilt Ladder-back Chair. B. Seventeenth Century Turned Table

lated types in Spain, especially as the latter country had begun to copy English types and to draw fashions from the same source as the English cabinet and chair makers. During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, turned, painted and gilt ladder-back chairs (Fig. 28a) were of common occurrence. They often had rushed seats.

BENCHES

The Spanish partiality for benches of all sorts, already referred to in connexion with the furniture of the Renaissance, continued unabated throughout the

seventeenth century. Many of the old types persisted and there were also types made that more closely reflected the spirit of the times. Cf. Fig. 29b.

The bench shewn in Plate 130b illustrates a sort of bench with arms that enjoyed favour at the end of the

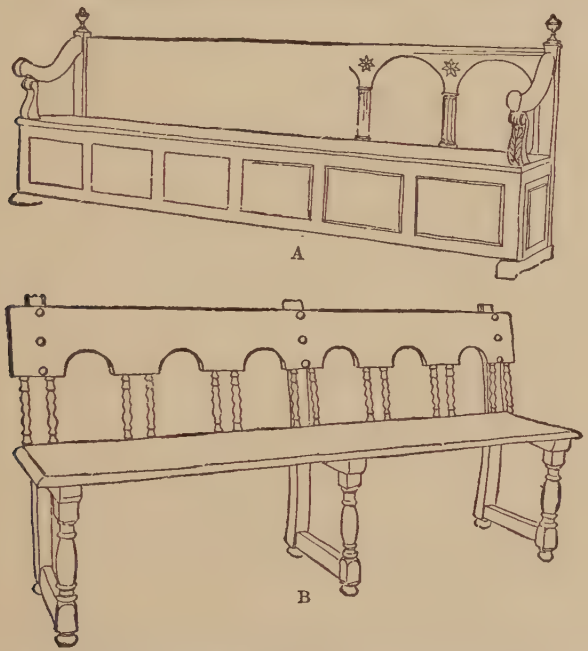


Fig. 29.—A. Seventeenth Century Bench with Closed and Panelled Base and Arcaded, Panelled Back. B. Seventeenth Century Bench with Turned Legs, Broad Arcaded Toprail and Turned Spindles

sixteenth century and in the early part of the seventeenth. Its close relationship with the chairs of the period is easily traced, particularly its points in common with the wooden-seated chairs with arcaded or spindled backs. The runner feet shew relationship with the early Renaissance habit and the design of small

panel divisions on the toprail, as well as the gouge carving, reflect Renaissance tendencies. The arms are a somewhat later feature. Cf. also Fig. 29a.

The bench (Plate 130a) covered with quilted leather, with splayed lyre-scrolled legs and wrought iron brace is also in a manner common to the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth.

The bench or settle (Plate 131a) is distinctly a seventeenth century creation in the manner of the panelling that forms its high back and in the turning of the legs and armposts. The fine fluting on the end stiles of the panelled back is typical of seventeenth century work. The elaborately carved, painted and gilt bench (Plate 132b) is in every way thoroughly characteristic of the most extreme Baroque tendencies of the age. A certain amount of the seventeenth century furniture manifested these influences in no uncertain form, but a great deal of the furniture maintained its wonted sobriety of aspect without indulging in any of the extravagances of the day.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

SPANISH BACKGROUNDS

ONE may say, in a general way, that there were two types of fixed background to be considered in connexion with eighteenth century furniture in Spain. On the one hand, there were the interiors that shewed comparatively little change in their composition from the manner of the preceding centuries, thanks to strong Spanish conservatism; on the other, there were the interiors that were modelled wholly upon contemporary French and English fashions.

English fashions were exceedingly popular in certain phases and, when copied in the furniture of the day, succeeded in being interesting and somewhat individual without transgressing any principles of good taste. French fashions in decoration and furniture, on the other hand, seemed to invite all manner of excess and exaggeration in the course of their translation into a Spanish medium. If we wish to visualise the eighteenth century Spanish interior patterned after French models, we have only to fancy a French interior highly exaggerated and often carried to the extent of ostentatious and overly sumptuous vulgarity, although some of the more sober *late* eighteenth century interiors, under the influence of the Louis Seize and

Directoire precedents, were of pleasant and unexceptionable character.

FURNITURE

ARTICLES OF FURNITURE IN GENERAL USE

The articles of furniture in common use in eighteenth century Spain were virtually the same as those in use in other European countries. Those who made a point of following French and English styles, also gave up their inherited predilections and used whatever was used in the countries whose modes they affected.

TYPES OF DECORATION

The decorative processes employed and the types of decoration followed in eighteenth century Spain were reflections of the processes and motifs used in England or France. National individualities in such matters were surrendered and fell into abeyance and foreign manners, in both respects, were closely adhered to with little indication of any dominating local quality.

BENCHES AND SETTEES

One of the best examples of the punctilious fidelity with which Spanish chairmakers absorbed English or French types may be seen in the four-chairback, cane-seated settee (Plate 132a) drawn from English inspiration supplied by a Queen Anne settee. It is of mahogany with gilded carving. The contour is almost wholly English, barring certain little quirks of local interpretation; the *motifs* of the carving and the

A. Early Eighteenth Century Quadruple Chairback Mahogany Settee with Gilded Carving Caned Seat, Cabriole Legs
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

B. Seventeenth Century Carved, Painted and Gilt Bench
Courtesy of Arte y Decoracion

A

B

A. Early Eighteenth Century Red Lacquer Bureau-bookcase, Slant-top Desk
B. Same with Desk and Doors Open; Back Painted as Background for Shrine

A

B

A. Early Eighteenth Century Cabriole-legged Blue Lacquer Slant-top Secretary with Cupboard Above
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

B. Eighteenth Century Kettle-fronted Mahogany Parcel-gilt Bureau-bookcase; Dutch Influence
Courtesy of Karl Freund, New York City

A

B

A. Late Seventeenth Century Rosewood Veneered Slant-top Secretary with Shaped Stretcher. B. Early Eighteenth Century Mahogany and Rosewood Veneered and Banded Chest of Drawers
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A

A. Eighteenth Century Red Lacquer Chest of Drawers, Serpentine Front and Canted Corners, Bracket Feet. B. Late Eighteenth Century Rosewood Chest of Drawers with Inlaid Decoration; Canted Corners Fluted and Parcel Gilt; Scrolled Feet Canted and Gilt

Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A

B

A. Late Eighteenth Century Mahogany Six-legged Bedstead; Headboard Shaped, Painted and Gilt
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

B. Early Eighteenth Century Low-post Bedstead with Cabriole Legs; Shaped Headboard Painted and Gilt
Courtesy of Daniel Haddock Farr, Esquire, Philadelphia

A. Early Eighteenth Century Red Lacquer Table, Cabriole Legs, Shaped Apron. B. Early Eighteenth Century Small Walnut Cabriole-legged Gate Table
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

A. Early Eighteenth Century Carved Walnut Fiddle-back Chair, Carved Splat
Courtesy of Karl Freund, New York City

B. Eighteenth Century Walnut Fiddle-back Chair, Shaped and Pierced Splat
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

C. Early Eighteenth Century Painted Chair, Spooned Back, Whorled Cresting
Courtesy of Miss Woodville, Philadelphia

D. Early Eighteenth Century Cabriole-legged Walnut Armchair
Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

manner of its distribution bear witness to the Spanish inherent love of gorgeousness.

The mahogany wooden-seated settee of Sheraton type (Plate 131b), on the other hand, shews the restraint with which the Spanish chairmakers of the late eighteenth century could interpret the patterns they borrowed.

WRITING FURNITURE

Eighteenth century writing furniture displayed all the variations of style manifested by the writing furniture of England and France. The blue lacquer slant-topped secretary, with a cupboard or bookcase above, is a northern Spanish creation so closely modelled upon English precedent (Plate 134a) that the curve of the cabriole legs and the extremely robust proportions of every member are the chief indications of Spanish origin. In the same way, the *bombé*-fronted bureau bookcase (Plate 134b) is so closely analogous to French or Dutch prototypes that only its exaggerated curves and the extra share of gorgeousness stamp it as a Spanish creation.

Eighteenth century Spain was passionately fond of lacquer and the splendid red lacquer bureau bookcase (Plates 133a and b) is an excellent example of the best Spanish work of the period. It is a really magnificent piece and, in executing such a work, the eighteenth century Spanish cabinetmaker was at his best. The elaborate shaping of the top, the decoration of the inside drawers and cupboard, and the painting of the

inside of the cupboard (which once contained a shrine) are the characteristically Spanish features of its composition.

The little rosewood veneered slant-topped secretary, of William and Mary fashion (Plate 135a), is an exceedingly beautiful and also well-made piece of furniture, designed and executed before the spirit of servile copyism had sapped the individuality of so many Spanish artisans.

CHESTS OF DRAWERS

Although the chest of drawers was never a particularly popular article of furniture in Spain and people seemed to prefer to use chests for putting away clothing, nevertheless the devotees of fashion countenanced a certain number of them and they were made more or less over the greater part of Spain.

One of the best examples of Spanish effort in this direction is the little early eighteenth century piece, of Queen Anne affinities, with veneered bandings around the drawers (Plate 135b). Another exquisite example of Spanish red lacquer work is the Chippendale chest of drawers (Plate 136a) with serpentine front, which is splendid in body colour and admirable in gilt decoration. The moulded brackets with depending swags on the canted corners indicate Spanish interpretation.

One of the finest pieces of eighteenth century Spanish work, in the direction of chests of drawers, is shewn in Plate 136b, an Hepplewhite-inspired, serpentine-

fronted piece with exquisite mahogany and rosewood veneer and delicate inlay of the finest quality. The fluted corner stiles, the capitals and the feet, of unmistakably Spanish character, are gilded. No finer piece of the period, from any country, could be desired.

BEDSTEADS

The Spaniard has always betrayed a weakness for gorgeously decorated bedsteads. Even at the end of the eighteenth century, when Neo-Classic restraint was the order of the day, he could not resist the temptation to embellish. The six-legged mahogany bedstead, of somewhat Sheraton quality (Plate 137a), is a good instance of the way in which some of the adaptations of the period were worked out. The pineapple finials of the posts are gilded and the headboard, with somewhat unwonted shaping at the top, has a correspondingly shaped panel elaborately painted and gilt.

The early eighteenth century bedstead (Plate 137b) with shaped headboard of late Baroque contour, lends itself much more kindly to this tradition of elaborate polychrome headboard decoration.

TABLES

The tables of eighteenth century Spain were as nearly as possible copies of the tables in current use in England and France. The little red lacquer table with drawers (Plate 138a) is a representative specimen of the pleasant manner in which the English Queen Anne manner could be expressed by the Spanish artisan. The

lacquer surface is good, the gold decoration is quite as good as on many English pieces of the period, and the contour of the legs, with their slightly Spanish flavour, is thoroughly agreeable. The little cabriole-legged gate table with drop leaves (Plate 138b) is of interest because it shews the ingenuity in devising all manner of small tables—an art which the Spanish craftsman never gave up—and also because it shews the peculiar high knee and reticent curve characteristic of many Spanish cabriole legs.

Other tables of the period, including the gorgeously ornate Louis Quinze gilt consoles, found their faithful counterparts in the contemporary creations of the Iberian peninsula.

CHAIRS

The chairs of eighteenth century Spain, like the chairs of the end of the seventeenth century, manifested every possible variation of style current in either England or France. It is, therefore, impossible to illustrate every type at this time. The chairs shewn in Plates 139 and 140 will serve to convey an adequate conception of the way in which those styles were interpreted.

Perhaps the most characteristically Spanish of the examples shewn is 139c, an early eighteenth century type of Queen Anne affinities with painted decorations. The scalloped seatrail and the high cresting or headrest are its most emphatically Spanish features.

The chairs in 139b and d, despite their points of

A. Late Eighteenth Century Mahogany Parcel Gilt Cane-seated "Sheraton" Armchair. B. Late Eighteenth Century Painted and Parcel Gilt "Louis Seize" Chair. C. Early Eighteenth Century Painted and Parcel Gilt Armchair of *Régence* Affinity. D. Eighteenth Century Cane-seated Mahogany Chair with Gilded Carving

Courtesy of former C. M. Traver Co., New York City

resemblance to contemporary chairs elsewhere, could not well be mistaken for other than Spanish, but 139a might easily pass for a late William and Mary or early Queen Anne chair or a Dutch chair of the period.

Much more graceful and much more true to the spirit of their prototypes are the Sheratonesque chair (Plate 140a) and the Louis Seize chair (Plate 140b); scarcely so much can be said for the rendering of the *Régence* armchair (Plate 140c), while the cane-seated mahogany and gilt chair (Plate 140d) is stamped as a Spanish Queen Anne adaptation by its opulent carving and gilding.

PORTUGUESE FURNITURE

PORTUGUESE FURNITURE

IN MANY respects, the development of Portuguese furniture ran parallel with the development of Spanish furniture so that there would be no point in making a separate issue of Portuguese furniture history during a large part of the period here considered.

Owing, however, to Portugal's early and highly important trade relations with India and the farther East, relations in which Spain did not share, Portugal became the channel by which very significant Oriental elements were brought into the design of European furniture. These elements it is often possible to trace with some degree of certainty; again, we can only conjecture, weigh probabilities and trace analogies in the light of such historical data as we possess.

Our discussion of Portuguese furniture, therefore, will be confined to those aspects of its history that explain the introduction of fresh influences in European furniture design, influences that travelled far beyond the boundaries of Portugal and Spain and affected the character of chairs, tables and cabinetwork in England and America, France and Italy.

In order to appreciate fully Portugal's early preeminence as a commercial agent in European cultural development, through extensive importations from the

Orient, we must note Portuguese exploration activities and trade relations in the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Following close in the wake of the daring Portuguese navigators, the shrewd Portuguese traders, through whose hands actually passed "the wealth of Ormuz and of Ind" at their factories established in the East, sailing home in argosies well laden with curious and divers cargoes, brought back many an article of luxurious domestic equipment to tempt rich merchants and nobles and to inspire Portuguese craftsmen.

King John II (1481–1495), who firmly believed, as did all his contemporaries, in the existence "of a Christian monarchy across the Indian Ocean," that fabled "land of Prester John . . . more far, by many days' dreadful journey, than Cathay," and was minded to discover the "local habitation" of that mighty potentate, in order that he might cement a commercial and military alliance with him, forehandedly despatched Pedro de Covilhan to the East by land. That worthy "visited Calicut and Goa, travelling thence by Aden and Cairo, and voyaged with Arabs to Sofala on the east coast of Africa; then staying for some time at Ormus, at that day the depôt for the spices and other rich products of the East, gained much information regarding the Oriental trade." From this auspicious beginning Portuguese trading posts and colonies were planted one after another in rapid succession along the

whole southern coast line of Asia and the adjacent islands, stretching from the island of Ormus, just at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, on to the east to the peninsula and town of Macao, granted in 1557 by the Chinese as an act of gratitude for the suppression of a notorious pirate.

The colonies at Ormus and Malacca, these two great gateways of far eastern trade, were enormously profitable. All during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries vast quantities of merchandise, including pieces of furniture and also other articles of domestic equipment, that afforded fruitful inspiration to the Portuguese furniture makers, were exported from these focal points, to which was drawn *the very cream of Persian, Indian and Chinese commerce* under the sole administration of the Portuguese viceroys and the vigorous initiative of Portuguese merchants who found it worth their while to pay into the royal treasury an handsome sum for the trading concessions they enjoyed. Lisbon was a great mart whither resorted Spanish, French, Dutch and British traders, and so firmly established were the Portuguese stations that Portuguese influence remained an important commercial factor throughout the eighteenth century.

The sources of inspiration that determined the expression of Portuguese decorative art from the sixteenth century onward were complex. It will suffice for our purpose, however, to direct attention to three

vigorous non-European strains that entered into the compound—Moorish, Indian and Chinese or Indo-Chinese. The dominant quality of distinctly Portuguese furniture, so far as embellishment is concerned, seems to have been an intense, and at times excessive, intricacy of decoration combined with extraordinary delicacy. This quality we find not only throughout the work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but continuing its influence long afterwards in the eighteenth.

This extreme intricacy and delicacy of decoration are well exemplified in the two cabinets shewn in Plate 141. Both pieces are of the type either made at the factory at Goa, from instructions furnished by Portuguese traders, or else made in Portugal after patterns of Moorish and Indian work brought from Goa. The Moorish influence is clearly evident in the *vargueño*-like arrangement of the tops of both cabinets; the Indian or Indo-Chinese influence is perceptible in the minute bone inlay and in the forms of the lower parts. The same curious Oriental influence of contour is also traceable in the table shewn in Plate 143b.

Most of us are so accustomed to accepting with a certain sense of finality the statement that spiral twisted legs appeared in England about 1663 that we too often fail to enquire whence the fashion came. It is quite true that spiral legs presumably of English make had appeared in very rare instances before that date, but they were irregular hand-wrought perform-

PLATE 141

A

B

A. Bone-inlaid Cabinet on Bone-inlaid Tall Stand with Carved Feet; Goa Factory Type
B. Bone-inlaid Cabinet, on Bone-inlaid Receding Cabinet Base with Oriental Carved Figure Legs; Goa Factory Type

A

B

A. Eighteenth Century Mahogany Roundabout Chair, Cabriole Legs, Paw Feet and Turned Saltire Stretcher. B. Bone-inlaid Table with Spiral Twist Splayed Legs and Stretchers; Goa Factory Type
Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington

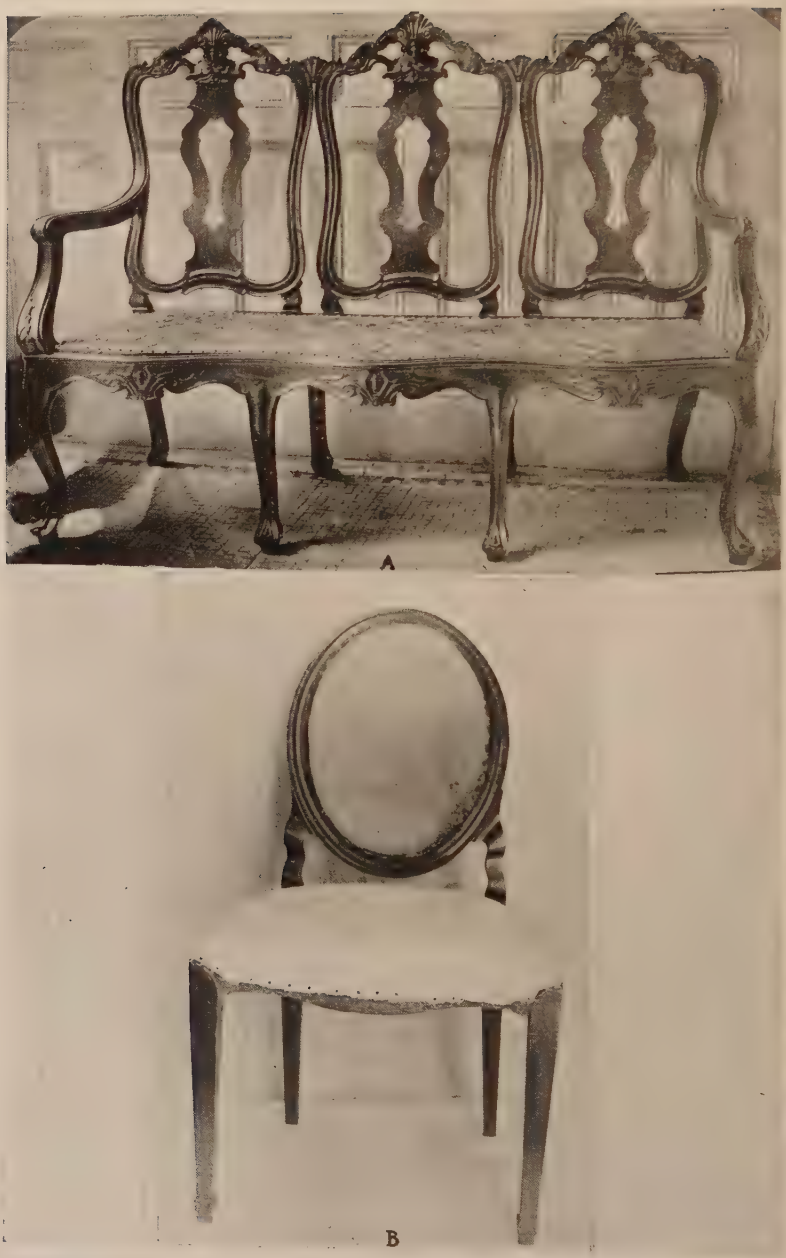
A

B

A. Seventeenth Century *Papelera* on Seventeenth Century Carved Walnut Table with Lyre-scroll Trestle Legs

B. Table with Inlaid Top, Legs and Stretchers and Oriental Scrolled Feet; Goa Factory Type

Courtesy of Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington



A. Eighteenth Century Mahogany Triple Chairback Settee, Pierced Vase Splats and Carved Cresting. B. Late Eighteenth Century Mahogany "Hepplewhite" Oval-back Chair with "Ribbon" Backposts
Courtesy of Carvalho Brothers, New York City

ances and totally different in aspect from the well proportioned spiral turnings that enjoyed such vogue after the date mentioned and were found as the legs of cabinet stands and as legs, arms, backposts, and stretchers for chairs, stools and day-beds. The most plausible explanation is that the *fashion* of spiral turning came into England as a direct result and concomitant of the marriage of the King with Catharine of Braganza, after whose " arrival with her suite, much Indo-Portuguese furniture, of ebony or blackwood, richly carved and with twisted columns, was imported." John Evelyn, who had been presented by the King with a chair of this make, tells us in his *Diary* that "the Queen brought over with her such Indian Cabinets as never had been seen before." As a matter of fact, the spiral twist had been a favourite Portuguese *motif* for many years previously and had enjoyed not a little popularity in Spain also in certain capacities. The fashion, in the first instance, was apparently taken from the ebony chairs and stools imported from northern India. An example of this spiral twist, along with minute inlay, may be seen in the little table shewn in Plate 142b. While it would, perhaps, be too sweeping an assertion to say that spiral turning in all European furniture was attributable to Portuguese influence, nevertheless, in the case of Spain and England, it seems safe to ascribe such an origin.

The caning of seats and backs of chairs, a device

that must plainly have originated in a warm country, can also be ascribed to a Portuguese introduction into Europe. The earliest use of cane, itself an Oriental product, occurred in the Iberian peninsula and evidence points to its introduction as derived from Portuguese commerce with the East. The so-called Spanish foot, which made its appearance in England and the Low Countries at very nearly the same time with caning, had been in use in Portugal and Spain at a much earlier period and, though there is some ground for dispute as to its Spanish or Portuguese origin, its primary inspiration seems attributable to Portuguese importations from India. Bulb turning apparently is also another feature for which we are ultimately indebted to the Orient through Portuguese channels.

The quality of extreme opulence and elaboration seems to have dominated Portuguese furniture, whether the furniture was of some type assimilated from Oriental originals imported by the early Portuguese traders or whether the model came from some other source. This quality may easily be seen in such divers examples as the mahogany roundabout eighteenth century chair in Plate 142a, the seventeenth century table and *papelera* in Plate 143a, or the early eighteenth century triple-chairback settee in Plate 144a. The spirit of restraint seems to have been wholly foreign to Portuguese conception until the Neo-Classic mode became dominant in the latter part of the eighteenth cen-

tury. How exquisite could be the Portuguese rendering of this mode may be seen by the Portuguese mahogany oval back "Hepplewhite" chair shewn in Plate 144b.

Portuguese furniture offers a wide and fruitful field of investigation. It must be studied, however, not only from the evidence of examples whose history is duly authenticated, but also in the light of the testimony supplied by historical documents dealing with Portugal's ancient trade relations with the Orient.

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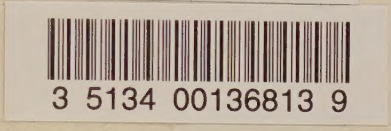

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